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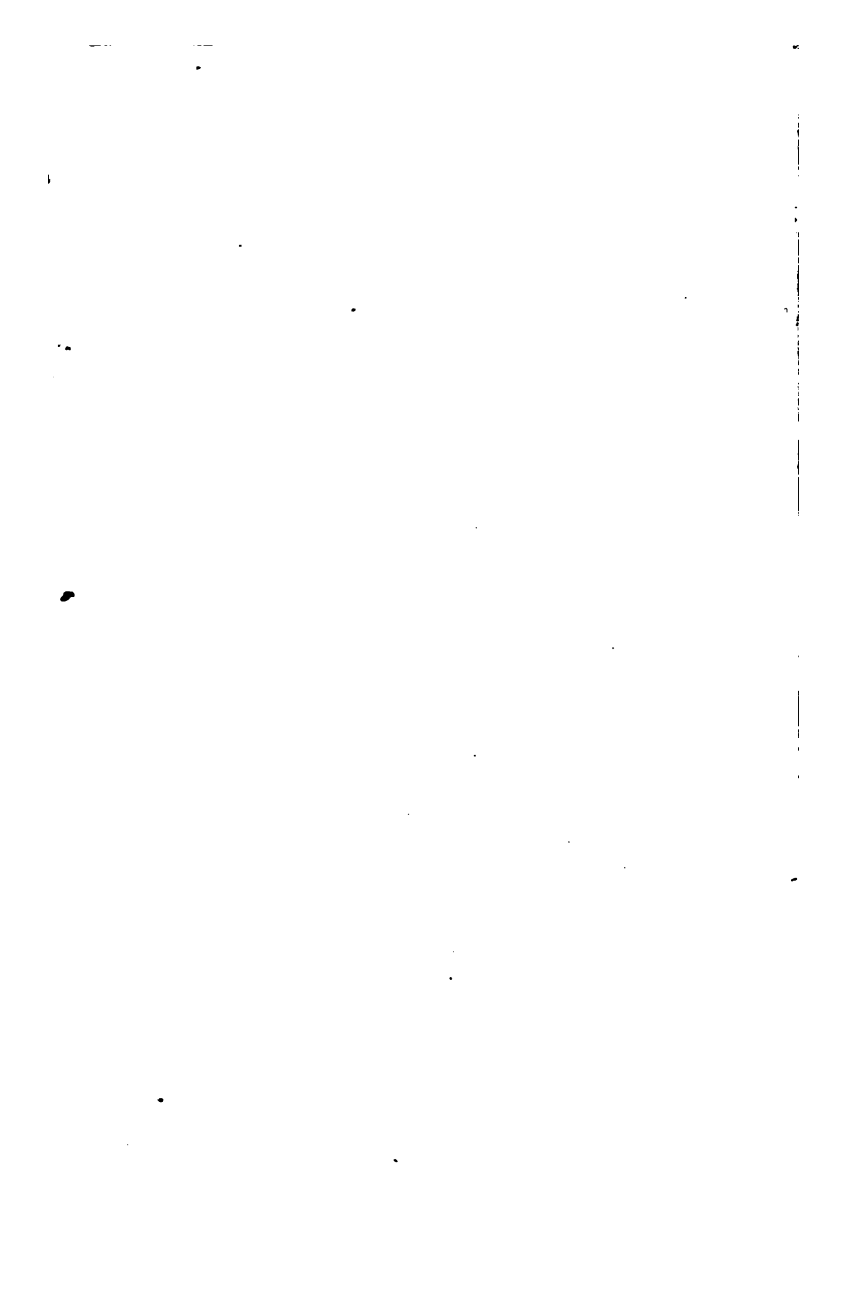
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LONDON.



LONDON:

SOME ACCOUNT OF

ITS GROWTH, CHARITABLE AGENCIES,
AND WANTS.

BY

CHARLES B. P. BOSANQUET, M.A.

BARRISTER-AT-LAW.

With a Coloured Map.



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PREFACE.

MY object in writing this book is to give newcomers to London, and especially young professional men, some such information about the great City as I should have been glad of myself a few years ago.

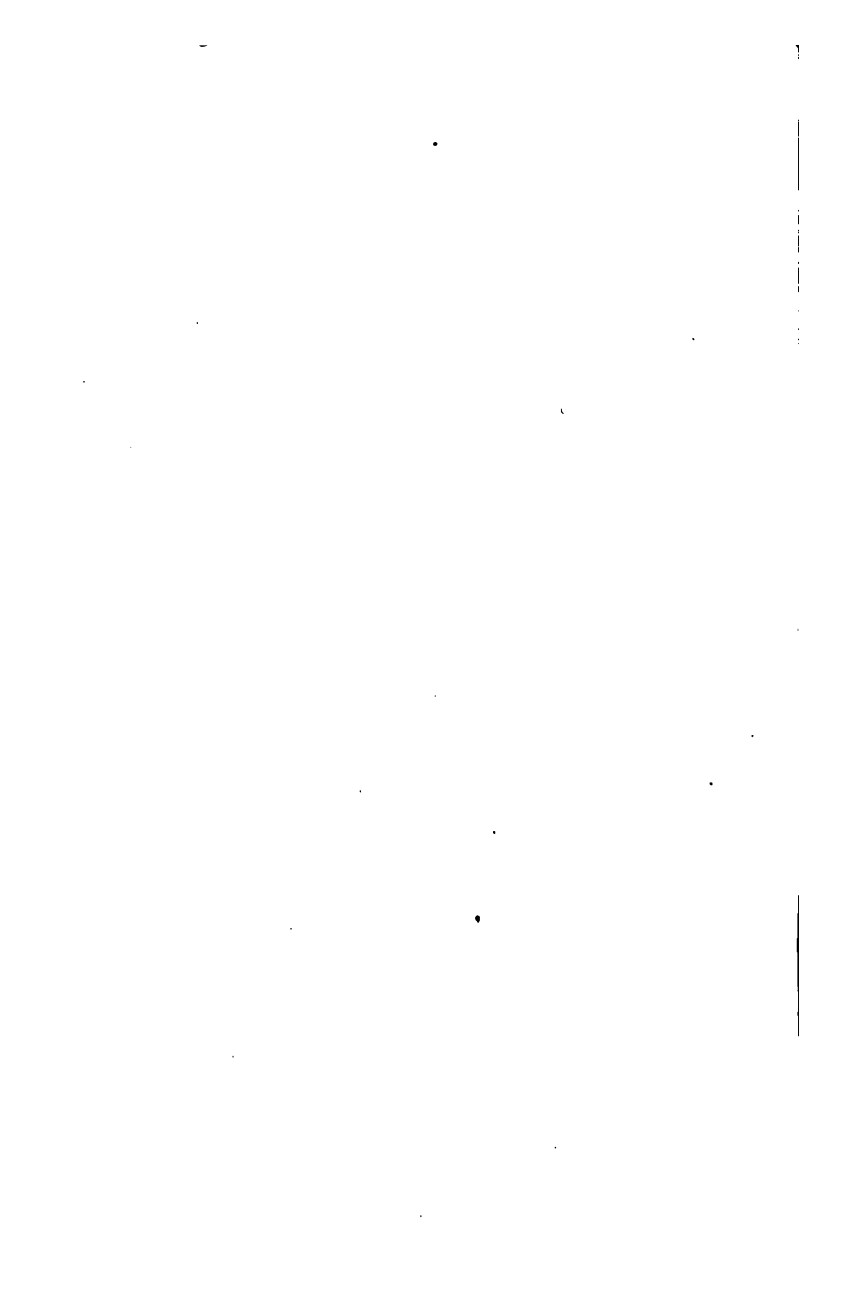
One great advantage which London offers to house-wives is that of being able to get exactly what they want, down to half a herring; it offers similar facilities to those who are willing to lend a hand to smooth the path of some of the poor about them; every one may find work to do suitable to the time and talents he has at command. On the other hand, one of the greatest evils of London at present is that rich and poor have very little knowledge of each other. Even in those parts where rich and poor are

living near each other, a respectable poor person may die or sink into destitution for want of a little timely help or advice, which it would be a pleasure to many a richer neighbour to give. Hence it becomes important, not only that every right-thinking man should exert himself according to his opportunities, but that he should take some pains to inform himself what agencies are at work in the same district, and should try to fit himself in amongst them to the best advantage. It is perhaps too much to hope that so vast a field as the sickness and poverty of London offer will ever be thoroughly or systematically cared for, but every step towards this is clear gain in itself, and the more judiciously and economically the available labour is applied the more good will be done, and the nearer we shall be to our end.

I propose, therefore, to point out a few of the numerous ways in which young men and others resident in London may help the poor, and to give information as to some of the most prominent existing agencies, and I have prefaced what I have to say on these subjects by some

more general matter about the characteristic features and history of the Metropolis, thinking that my readers may combine an interest in such topics with their desire to relieve its wants. I need hardly say that I make no attempt to treat such subjects exhaustively in a book of this size. I write as a learner to learners; not as attempting to give a complete account either of the needs of London or of its charitable machinery. I am painfully aware of defects both in the design and execution of my task; I can only hope that in spite of these it may, by God's blessing, be of some use to a cause which I have much at heart.

May 6th, 1868.



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CLUE-MAP OF LONDON.

ERRATA AND ADDENDA.

Page 6, line 16, instead of "business," read "busy-ness."

Page 32, read the latter clause of the first note at the end of the second note.

Page 59, transpose the notes.

Page 105, line 14, instead of "a very small rate," read "a rate of less than twopence in the pound."

CHAPTER I.

HOW LONDON STRIKES A STRANGER.

SOME years ago a young Caffre, fresh from a visit to Europe, was heard recounting the wonders he had seen to the chiefs of his nation. He told them of many marvellous things; amongst others, of the kettle on wheels, that had dragged him along faster than any horse; but the wonder of wonders evidently to his mind was London—"the great place of the English." His description is so amusing that I think my readers will thank me for quoting part of it. One of the listeners inquired how large this great place was. The young man replied:—

"We never saw the end of it; we tried hard to find it, but could not; we ascended a very high

building like a pole (the Monument), to see where it ended, but our sight was filled with houses, and streets, and people; we heard that many people, born and grown old there, had never seen the end of it, and we said, 'If such is the case, why should we, who are strangers, look for it?' We gave it up. The people are so numerous that they tread one upon another; all day and all night the streets are crowded; we thought some great thing had happened, and said, Let us wait till the people have passed on, but they never did pass; if any one falls down he is trodden upon and dies, there is no rising again for him unless his own strength help him. The surface of the earth is too small for the people, and some live under the earth, even under the water."

"That must be a lie, young man," exclaimed one of the listeners.

"I hate liars," said another.

"Perhaps it may be true," said a third, "let him explain."

His explanation was an easily recognised description of the Thames Tunnel.

"We were told," he continued, "that two brothers got separated in the streets, and it took

a letter from one two months to find the other, and he was in London all the while. You know how fast letters always travel."

"Are the people of London all rich?" said one of the hearers.

"Many are rich and many are poor; in such a great place there is all that is beautiful and all that is bad."

"We crossed the sea and saw the French, Belgians, Germans, and Prussians; we saw all their great places."

"Are they like London?"

"Their houses are, but in size they are all like children to London. . . . Paris is large and so is Berlin but London is the mother, and could hold one in each arm."*

I must not quote more, but I strongly recommend those of my readers, who can procure the *Natal Journal* at the British Museum or elsewhere, to read the rest for themselves. The Editor vouches for the accuracy of the Report.

I have met with a hardly less amusing and hardly less strongly expressed, though much more

* *Natal Journal*, ii. 126, 130.

discriminating, tribute to our great city in a book containing an account of the visit of the Cologne Singers to London in 1853. It is from the pen of Dr. Ernst Weyden, and appeared originally in the form of letters to the *Kölnische Zeitung*. If we wish to see how the Carthage of the nineteenth century, as the writer calls it, strikes a stranger, we can hardly do better than follow his guidance. It may help to revive in some of us that interest in the place, which cannot but be felt under the influence of novelty, but is apt to flag as we become familiar with it.

First let me say that the Cologne Song-Union is an association composed entirely of amateurs. There are similar associations in other German towns; they visit each other for friendly trials of skill, and the Cologne Union has twice come as far as London to win itself renown. The proceeds of their concerts here were handed over to the fund for completing Cologne Cathedral.

It was in June, 1853, that the Singers, some eighty in number, started on their expedition to the people-teeming world-town. (I follow our author's words as nearly as I can.) The writer

had been in London before, but most of them had never seen the Carthage of the nineteenth century, and its wonders. I must not linger over a graphic description of the horrors of their voyage from Ostend, enough that they brought out the wonders of the Thames in bolder relief. The marvels which incredible industry had wrought along the banks of the stately river defied description. Knowledge could not be taken in fast enough by eye or ear, as their steamer, with the tide in her favour, wound her way merrily amongst the colliers, fishing-boats, lordly three-masters, and steamboats of all sizes to the landing-place at Blackwall. "It was all new, all overpoweringly grand, hardly to be grasped in its gigantic contrasts; hence the impression it makes is often unkindly and depressing." Their bird's-eye view of the East-end, a *partie honteuse* of the world-town, as a special train whirled them along the Blackwall Railway to Fenchurch Street, was disappointing; but great was their surprise and delight, as their omnibuses trotted them off through the deafening throngs of vehicles and men that crowd the City,—the very heart of the Leviathan of all the cities of the world, past the Exchange and Bank,

through St. Paul's Churchyard, and by Trafalgar Square with its imposing proportions, to their lodgings in the neighbourhood of Leicester Square.

It was on a Saturday morning that they reached their quarters, and they soon started off again in parties, risking themselves, says our author, with a marvellous courage amongst the migrating hordes of a London Saturday, in reliance on their good luck, their maps of London, and the words "Leicester Square."

Some ventured back into the busy, money-making City. They saw the sovereigns rain down on the counters at the Bank, and marvelled at the hurry that marks Saturday there. They marvelled still more at the ant-like business about the butchers' and bakers' shops. "True, people shop on Saturday for two days. But such piles of bread and meat! One is startled, for it takes long to make oneself familiar with the thought, that some three millions of people have to be fed here every day on a space some ten miles long by eight broad." Many statements about London, he adds, must seem incredible to a foreigner, till he measures them by these figures. In 1851, more than half the population of Eng-

land was in her 815 towns, and three-tenths of this population was in London. Kensington, which he had known a few years before as a single street, was now a perfect town with five large churches.* “And when will the growth of the giant city stop? Not till the sun of Britain’s greatness sets.”

The General Post Office was another sight, some had the good fortune to see the hurry-scurry before the closing of the great window at six o’clock. In the few minutes previous fifty or sixty sacks of newspapers were emptied through it, and thousands of letters and parcels flew over the heads of the foremost messengers, to save the post.

Indescribable were the sights in Holborn, Oxford Street, and Regent Street, where one wealth-abounding shop succeeds another, and single gold and silversmiths have more ornaments

* The Census of 1861 enumerates twenty-three parochial districts as formed out of the old parish of Kensington. On the other hand, Mr. Cunningham, writing in 1843, thought it necessary to explain that he included Kensington in his Hand-book to London, “on account of its Gardens.” The old parish included Notting Hill; but Dr. Weyden evidently refers to what may be called Kensington proper,—the neighbourhood of the Church and High Street.

and plate heaped in their windows than all the shops of all the Rhine province put together. The pavement, broad as a street, was thronged by the most elegant women, with powdered footmen and splendid equipages waiting their pleasure.

But nothing moved our author to envy more than the Parks, with their "smiling turf." He tells how, that Saturday afternoon, school children were playing and rolling on it, families sitting about, and loungers taking their siesta, without let or hindrance from the police. "The English Government does not attempt to keep the people in leading-strings, and its officials know that they are the servants of the public, and not its masters."

The unapproached incomparable traffic of the streets offered the richest material for observation and entertainment, and this all the more when they had so far collected themselves after the first overpowering impression as to be able to observe it at their ease. Cabs and omnibuses, beer-waggons with their mammoth horses and their Goliaths of draymen, coal-waggons and tradesmen's carts, private carriages of all kinds, some driven by ladies, some by dandies, some

by the typical English coachman, surged backwards and forwards along the arteries of this Leviathan of cities from early morning to late evening. The turmoil went on even through the night, when the vans of heavy goods travel, and vegetables and other provisions are brought in. It would have been still more deafening in Paris or Naples, from the shouting and scolding of coachmen and carters; but London is above all things chary of words. Even when intersecting lines of vehicles get so entangled, that it seems as if they must crush each other, no swearing, no abuse, is to be heard; a policeman raises his hand without a word; all halt, as if stayed by magic, till he sets them free with a grave "go on." The same characteristic marked the busy activity of the steamboats on the Thames; when one of them, on which many of the Singers were, was disabled by a collision, there was no screaming, no running backwards and forwards, the passengers were passed on to another boat, with the utmost *sang-froid*. In Smithfield, too, there was a gravity and quietness amongst the cattle-dealers and butchers, which would not be found in the cattle-markets of Cologne. The Englishman is in general quietly active; he says no

more than he is obliged to say, for words cost time, and "time is money."* Even in Billingsgate (for it must be this, I suppose, that our author means by "the market in Fishmonger Hall,") the bargaining is carried on without unnecessary clamour. Mighty to look upon are the London fish-wives in their tarry coats and waterproof boots; the Paris "Poissardes" are ladies in comparison with them. "But very noble traits are attributed to these Amazons, whose herculean forms indicate the marvellous powers of porter and of beef."

All the fourteen chief markets are pronounced well worth visiting. Immediately after midnight thousands of vehicles crowd towards Covent Garden, to furnish the spacious halls with supplies, and till late morning the visitor finds every approach besieged with waggons, piled house-high with vegetables. But order reigns throughout the busy scene. London market life is full of interest, down to the porters,

* "Time and space," says our author, "are the two costliest things in London, often not to be had for hard money, and there are few things which money will not buy there."—*Sänger-Fahrt des Kölner Männer Gesang-Vereins nach London*, p. 51.

who contrive to carry perfect horseloads on their shoulders.

I pass over the statistics with which our author's pages bristle, though they are not without interest, extending as they do from the annual consumption of beer and coals, to the cost of the docks, and the gradual increase of the national debt, but fifteen years has made many of them out of date. Some of his general observations are more to our purpose.

In no other town in Europe, he says, do the extremes of human existence meet in so horri-
fying a way. On the one side is wealth like that in a fairy story,—such a display of magnificence and expenditure as may perhaps be in some measure met with in St. Petersburg, but quite outstrips the notions of the inhabitants of smaller towns; on the other, all the distress of human misery, in most ghastly nakedness, the bitterest poverty in so hideous a form that it makes one shudder again. The noblest purity and the most utter degradation, the most exquisite intelligence and the most brutal coarseness, meet in such sharp undisguised contrast, as one would seek in vain even in Paris. There are quarters where hunger, want, disease, and vice, have

pitched a foul camp, which the most beneficent efforts of the rich will never be able to overpower. It is well for England that she can spend large sums in public and private charity, and yet, as Dr. Weyden reads history, the destiny of London and of England, in spite of emigration and other palliatives, will hinge on these abnormal social conditions.

In the evening, the so-called Gin-palaces, radiant with floods of light, and lavishly decorated, are like fairy palaces to thousands in their enticing splendour. Men and women, from whose hollow cheeks the most biting hunger grins out at you; and mothers, pictures of wretchedness, with half-naked babies in their arms, crowd to the doors of the spirit-shops with the vicious and the criminal, and there they seek to forget the hunger and want, the anxiety and misery, of the day, in the accursed, stupefying dram. It makes one shudder to see the quantities of spirits that are consumed in these places; how even women toss off great glasses of this devil's brew, which not only degrades man below the brute, but can even transform him into the most savage of wild beasts. The criminal annals of Northern Germany, as well as those of England, tell how

many of the worst crimes are begotten of the spirit dram. Gin is still, alas! the consolation of the London labourer, and more than 8000 liquor-shops testify to the demand there is for it. Amongst the upper classes, continues our author, the taste for strong drink is not so great as it once was. Dr. Weyden would, I think, be disposed to attribute some considerable part of these social evils to the want of intercourse between different classes. He often remarks on the sharpness of social distinctions amongst us, and on what he calls our mania for isolation. The Englishman is a non-gregarious animal (*ein Sonder-thier*), and even in his coffee-house, and eating-room, he boxes himself up between high partitions. The Londoner trusts no one, and takes his own shadow for a rogue.

But, whatever may be our faults, our author gives us credit for practical ability and purpose-likeness, and for having long ago struck the word "impossible" out of our dictionary. The power of capital, too, has reached its highest point in England. The laying of the Atlantic cable, and the bringing of the principal railways into the heart of London, over the houses or under the houses, which our author refers to as bold pro-

jects, are now in great part or altogether achieved. Is it too much to hope that like energy and capital may be directed to supply the material wants which keep hundreds of thousands of our fellow-citizens in such a state as has been described?

CHAPTER II.

GROWTH OF OLD LONDON.

“It is the peculiar compensation to the inhabitants of a city like this, that what others gain from the study and enjoyment of nature, you may gain from the study and enjoyment of history.”—*Lecture before the Young Men's Christian Association*, by the Rev. A. P. Stanley, 1854.

“THE name of London,” says Mr. Isaac Taylor, in his interesting *Words and Places*, “is now, in all probability, pronounced exactly as it was when Cæsar landed on the coast of Kent.” Mr. Taylor gives no opinion as to the meaning of the first syllable; others derive it from *Lough*, Celtic for ships; and all seem agreed that the last syllable is equivalent to *dun* or *din*,—a stronghold. Thence he argues that even in Celtic times there was a hill-fortress here, “formed by Tower Hill,

Corn Hill, and Ludgate Hill, and effectually protected by the Thames on the south, the Fleet on the west, the great Fen of Moorfields and Finsbury on the north, and by the Houndsditch on the east."

That there was a hill-fort, or more than one, on this site in pre-Roman times, analogous to those which are still to be seen in the mountains of North Wales and in the Cheviots, we cannot doubt, though it is hardly likely that the fortress of a savage tribe would occupy so much space as Mr. Taylor speaks of. But under the Romans the area was soon covered with inhabitants. Tacitus, who first mentions Londinium, speaks of it as "abounding in business and trade," A.D. 61. Colchester or Maldon (whichever represents Camulodunum) and St. Albans, seem at that time to have ranked before it as the chief cities of the province of Britain, but the Itinerary of Antoninus (a list of the principal roads throughout the empire, drawn up probably in the third or fourth century) shows that the situation of London on the principal river of the country was then making it the capital. It is to it that most of the great military roads converge, so that "a map of Roman Britain, based on this Itinerary, strikingly re-

sembles one of modern England.”* A mint was established in London in or before the time of Constantine, and about A.D. 380 Ammianus Marcellinus could speak of it as “an old city, to which recent times have given the name of Augusta.”

- There is no positive authority for the tradition that it was first walled at the request of Helena, the mother of Constantine, but it is probable enough that the walls were built at the end of the third or beginning of the fourth century. The Romans must by that time have had property in it worth protecting, and the Saxons, and other sea-rovers, were already beginning to be troublesome. The line of the greater portion of the Roman wall is well ascertained; it started from the Tower, and, like the later City walls, which indeed were in great part of their course of Roman work for half their height, ran north-west, by the Minories and Houndsditch, to Bishopsgate Street; hence it followed the line of the street still called London Wall westward to what is now the churchyard of St. Giles, Cripplegate; from this point some suppose that it ran straight south to the

* Notice of Mr. C. Roach Smith's *Illustrations of Roman London*, in *Times* of Feb. 19, 1859.

river, striking it at Queenhithe, so as to leave a cemetery on the site of St. Paul's outside the gates;* others think that it turned west again at Falcon Square, ran, by Christ's Hospital, to a point a little north of Newgate, and thence found its way to Queenhithe by Ludgate Hill and Upper Thames Street.† A wall along the river-bank completed the circuit.

On the former supposition the walled city would be about three-quarters of a mile each way, that is, rather less than Hyde Park, but the space was closely built over, and the population must have been considerable; according to Mr. Roach Smith, the remains found prove that there was "but little space throughout the entire area unoccupied by streets and buildings." The underground remains, foundations, pavements, coins, &c., are very numerous. Notwithstanding the prosperity of London, which, it has been justly pointed out, is the most fatal enemy to remains of antiquity in towns, some well-marked relics still remain *in situ*. No archæological knowledge is required to give an interest to the Roman Bath, in Strand Lane, to the east of Somerset House; and but little to make one ap-

* Knight's *London*, i. 166.

† *Times*, *ib.*

preciate the stone, now placed in the wall of St. Swithin's, Cannon Street, which once stood in more imposing proportions on the opposite side of the street, and is believed to have corresponded to the famous *Milliarium Aureum* at Rome, and to have been the centre from which all the British roads were measured. Portions of the Roman walls too, distinguishable by the layers of broad flat bricks between breadths of rag-stone and mortar, are still laid bare from time to time; and Roman work would probably be found on examination to form the base of the remains of the wall where it is still to be seen, *e.g.* on the north side of London Wall, opposite Sion College, and on the south side of Cripplegate Churchyard. It is a curious fact that Roman London appears to have been from fifteen to seventeen feet below the present surface, so that the ground on which the city stands has risen nearly a foot a century!*

Under the Saxons, London was at first only the capital of the insignificant kingdom of Essex, but Essex soon became tributary to Kent; and Sebert, king of Essex, and nephew of Ethelbert, king of Kent, is said to have then founded St.

* *Archæologist*, xxiv. 190.

Paul's, London, and St. Peter's, Thorney Island, now Westminster Abbey.* Bede, writing early in the eighth century, speaks of it in much such terms as Tacitus,—“ a mart-town of many nations, which repaired hither by sea and land ;” but a century later, after the union of the kingdoms of the Heptarchy under Egbert, Winchester, not London, was his capital, and the latter seems rarely mentioned in the Saxon Chronicle, excepting as the scene of plagues or fires. It is said that in A.D. 922 it was burnt for the seventh time !

Under the Normans London prospered. The Conqueror built the Tower, William II. the Palace of Westminster, and Henry I. gave the citizens a charter. We now begin to hear something about the population of London. Fitzstephen, writing in the time of Henry II., tells us, to prove its populousness, that in King Stephen's wars there went out from it to a muster men fit for war esteemed to number 80,000. But this must be an exaggeration. Mr. Hallam, with the Norman monk's statement before him, inclines to think

* This was at the beginning of the seventh century, but St. Peter's, Cornhill, claims to have been made the metropolitan church of the kingdom by Lucius, king of Britain, 400 years earlier!—*Modern History in London*, Lecture by the Rev. A. P. Stanley.

that the population in the twelfth century may have been about 40,000.*

The walls at this time ran straight south from Ludgate Hill to the river. According to Fitzstephen they were 2 miles 678 feet in length.† In 1276 the part to the south of Ludgate, Matthew Paris tells us, was pulled down to make way for a house founded by the Archbishop of Canterbury for the Preaching or Black Friars; and Edward I. thereupon commanded the city to build a new wall from Ludgate eastward to the Fleet, and along the Fleet to the Thames.‡

As commerce increased, London grew in importance. There is much point in a quaint story told by Stow. An alderman, hearing that Queen Mary, in her displeasure against London, "had appointed to remove with the parliament and term to Oxford, this plain man demanded, whether she meant to divert the river Thames also from London, or no? And when the gentleman

* *Middle Ages*, iii. 224.

† A good view of an angle of the wall is to be obtained by passing along Hart Street,—the continuation of London Wall westward, through the gate of the Cloth-workers' Almshouses, and then turning into a yard on the right. It divides the ground belonging to the Almshouses from the Churchyard of St. Giles', Cripplegate.

‡ Knight's *London*, i. 165.

had answered 'No,' 'Then,' quoth the alderman, 'by God's grace, we shall do well enough at London.' " *

The map, or rather bird's-eye view of London, attributed to Ralph Aggas, shows most clearly what London was in the early part of Queen Elizabeth's reign. Houses were then creeping out along most of the great thoroughfares. But, excepting the space between Fleet Street and the river, and a strip along the Surrey side from London Bridge, it may be said that none of the ground outside the walls between the great thoroughfares had been broken up for building. The City was still London, though it was reaching out a hand to its neighbour city of Westminster. Aggas' map shows a few houses to the east of the Tower, approachable from the Postern Gate, and a few along the road leading from "Aldegate;"

* Compare Mr. Rickman's remark in the Introduction to the Population Returns of 1831. "The situation of London was no doubt selected as at the head of a navigable tide-way, the deep water ceasing at London Bridge, and the river not being navigable for sea-borne vessels over the Vauxhall shoal. London is thus placed 50 miles inland; an advantage the more striking, as although England is not extensive enough to produce a large river, such access of shipping is unequalled (except perhaps by the Elbe,) on the Continent of Europe."—*Pop. Ret.*, 1831, p. 8.

there are houses too extending along the road from Bishopsgate as far as Shoreditch Church. Outside "Moregate" there is not a house, and "Finsbury Fyeld" (now, or till lately, the Eldorado of Ecclesiastical Reformers,) is occupied by cattle, with windmills in the background. Outside Cripplegate, is the Church of St. Giles', Cripplegate, and a few houses. "Schmytfield" is an open space, but there are houses along the roads which radiate from it. Hedges are indicated between the Fleet Ditch and Chancery Lane, but there are houses along Holborn to half-way between Holborn Bars and St. Giles's, and along Fleet Street and the Strand to Charing Cross and Westminster. Probably the houses along the Strand, like most of the other houses outside the walls, were of a low class; for Howell, who wrote in the reign of Charles II., tells us that it was owing to the Scots who came up with James I. "that the Strand, from mud walls and thatched cottages, acquired that perfection of buildings it now possesses."* To the west and north of St. Martin's Lane—to resume our description of Aggas' plan, there are fields without a house in them, though the "hay-market" is

* Quoted in Knight's *London*, i. 252.

named and marked, till we come to St. Giles' in the Fields,—a quiet country village, through which “y^e road to Oxford” passes. After looking at this map we can better understand Strype's matter-of-fact narrative,—how, after inspecting the conduits (or fountains), on the 18th September, 1562, and after dining not far from where Stratford Place now stands, “the Lord Mayor and Aldermen went to hunting the fox. There was a great cry for a mile, and at length the hounds killed him at the end of St. Giles's.”

There are of course many marked points of difference between even the City, as Aggas depicts it, and the City of our own day; thus, London Bridge alone spans the river, and the square tower and cruciform roof of St. Paul's stand out almost more conspicuously than the dome of its successor. But one is no less struck by resemblances, especially in the line and breadth of streets; a block of houses to the north of Bucklersbury narrowed the Poultry just as it does now, Newgate Market is named, and Middle Row, Holborn, seems to have been just the same in form as it was until its removal a few months ago. The Cock-pit, which occupies nearly the site of the Admiralty beside Whitehall Palace, and the

Arenas for bull and bear-baiting, which are conspicuous in Southwark, carry one's mind back to differences in the people rather than in the place.

The tendency to growth from this time is well marked by the stringent proclamations against building and sub-letting, issued by Elizabeth, James I., and Charles I. The Government was evidently in great alarm; it was feared that the inhabitants would multiply so "that they could neither be governed nor fed;" and when we observe how frequent famines and pestilences were, we cannot deny that there was some ground for anxiety, though we may think that the true remedies lay in a very different direction. Hudson, a writer of James I.'s time, was of opinion that punishment by the Star Chamber for breach of such proclamations was "surely very necessary, if anything would deter men from that horrible mischief of increasing that head which is swollen to a great hugeness already."* The general drift of these proclamations was to forbid building within three miles of London, excepting on old foundations, and they attempted to guard against the natural result of this prohibition, — overcrowding in existing houses, by no less stringent

* Hallam, *Const. Hist.* i. 451.

regulations against letting "to inmates and undersitters," as "leading to unholosome pesterings of poor people together."* Still the great city waxed larger and larger; but probably we must trace it to this unwillingness to allow or recognise its growth, that what is now the main part of the town was allowed to spring up distinct from and independent of the City, so that it had no unity or centre of government till within the last few years.

Even under the Commonwealth heavy fines were charged on new houses, with the declared object of checking building. Early in the reign of Charles I., in spite of proclamations, the fourth Earl of Bedford had employed Inigo Jones to build mansions round two sides of "Convent Garden," for persons of rank then migrating from Aldersgate Street. His sons had heavy building fines to pay, as we may judge from the fact that 7000*l.* was remitted on account of their having built and endowed St. Paul's, Covent Garden.† Clare Market, which, in 1656, had just been completed by John, Earl of Clare, in "Clement's Inn Fields," was expressly exempted from Crom-

* Rymer, viii. Part i. 25.

† Knight's *London*, v. 131.

well's retrospective fine. There was an exception, too, for buildings below London Bridge, within two furlongs of the river, belonging to mariners and ship-builders. The narrowness of some of the river-side streets, in East London, has been traced to the terms of this well-meant provision.*

The Great Fire put an end to all such restrictions, and hastened the movement of the rich out of town; "the marring of the town," as was said at the time, "was the making of the suburbs." It burnt, not only, as is generally said, from Pudding Lane near the Monument, to Pie Corner near Newgate, but (taking a line nearer the river) from the Tower to the Temple. It appears "by the certificate of the surveyors appointed to examine the ruins, that the fire over-ran 373 acres, and burnt 13,200 houses and eighty-nine parish churches, besides chapels, and that eleven parishes within the walls only remained standing."† This awful calamity offered a great opportunity for improving London, as was seen at the time. Within a week of the Fire, on the 13th September, 1666, the King issued a spirited and well-judged proclamation, directing that individual

* Noorthouck, *Hist. of London*, p. 201.

† *Id.* p. 229.

citizens should not rebuild their houses till some general design had been made; and Dr. Wren, afterwards Sir Christopher, was called on to make a ground-plan for the whole. His plan can be seen in Noorthouck's *History of London*. Looked at with our present lights it seems admirable; it would have anticipated some of our greatest recent improvements,—Cannon Street, and a great part of the Embankment, amongst others. He proposed to have a quay from the Tower to the Temple, a part of which is entitled in the plan, —“Y^e grand Terras, with y^e public Halls.” It is said to have been shown, that “by leaving out churchyards, gardens, and such-like, which were to be removed out of the town, there would have been sufficient room, both for the augmentation of the streets, dispositions of the churches, halls, and public buildings, and to have given every proprietor full satisfaction.” But there was not enterprise or public spirit enough for such an undertaking. Every man asserted his right to his own piece of ground, and in four years London was rebuilt of stone and brick instead of wood, which had been the prevailing material, and with the principal streets somewhat broader, but in the main on the old foundations.

Fortunately, the force of circumstances has made the narrow lanes of the City little more than passages between offices and warehouses, so that it is only here and there, and rather in its outskirts than in its heart, that Dr. Letheby has to call attention to such dens of filth and wretchedness as many of its ill-lighted and ill-ventilated streets might have become. It must be acknowledged that the Plague never returned to the restored City; and if this may be considered a consequence of the Fire, the Fire must be looked on as a blessing rather than an evil.*

In the latter half of the seventeenth century, we meet with the first noteworthy attempts to calculate the population of London. Soon after the Restoration, Howell persuaded himself that there were a million and a half of people in London. His argument was that a census, made by

* It is pleasant to stumble unexpectedly on material traces of the history of London. Wishing once to get into the churchyard opposite Sion College, I was directed to go for the key to a house in "Helmet Court." I passed along London Wall till I reached a doorway corresponding to the description given me; there was no name that I could see, but immediately above the doorway was a stone helmet, with the inscription, H. 1668. M. . Such a date in that place calls up the Great Fire and the rebuilding before one's mind's eye.

the Lord Mayor in 1636, had shown that there were then above 700,000 within the City and Liberties, and that, when he wrote, there would be found in Westminster, the Strand, Holborn, and parts contiguous, "as many inhabitants at least as were found before within that compass where the point of the Lord Mayor's sword reacheth."* But it appears that in a scrutiny made in 1631 (which may even be the census to which he refers), when Government was making provision against an anticipated dearth, the numbers in the City and Liberties were returned as only 130,268.† So that his calculations point to less than 300,000, as the total number, but this is probably below the mark. In 1682, Sir William Petty, a more trustworthy guide, estimated the number of houses at 84,000, the number of people at 672,000; but Gregory King, of the Herald's College, who

* The City was originally bounded by the line of the walls, but the Lord Mayor's jurisdiction has been gradually extended by royal grants to its present limits,—from Ludgate to Temple Bar, and from Newgate to Holborn Bars, on the west, and so on. The Liberties are certain privileged districts, like the Temple, included in the area of the City. The sleeping population of the City in 1861 was 113,387.

Knight's *London*, i. 250.

wrote fourteen years later, calculated the number of inhabitants then at only 479,600, or allowing for possible omissions at 530,000.* Sir W. Petty had a theory that London doubled itself every forty years, and prophesied that in 1800 the population would exceed five millions. He overstated the average increase in his own times,—indeed the population, which could not have been less than 500,000 at the beginning of last century, only rose to 864,845 by 1801, but we have now more than reached his rate of increase, for from 1,378,947 in 1821, it rose to 2,803,989 in 1861.†

* *Observations on England*, 1696, p. 35. Gregory King anticipated that in A.D. 1900 London would contain no more than 1,059,840 persons, p. 43.

† *Population Returns*, 1861.

CHAPTER III.

GROWTH OF MODERN LONDON : ITS "SUNKEN SIXTH."

A MAP of London, made for Noorthouck's *History and Survey*, and dated 1772, shows us what the extent of London was at that time. It is very interesting to compare it with Aggas' plan of two centuries earlier, and with a map of the present time.* In the course of such a comparison we shall see the relative positions of many districts well known by name to all readers of newspapers, but of the exact position of which many, probably, have but a vague notion. Noorthouck tells us that in his time London consisted of two cities, London and Westminster, the borough of Southwark and no fewer than 46 "ancient villages."† Under this last head he includes

* See Clue-map *ad finem*. The numerous "Greens" and "High Streets" in the Directory tell of the absorption of villages and provincial towns.

† *History*, p. 522.

many districts which even then had long been integral parts of the town, such as St. Clement Danes', Charing Cross, and Holborn; but Hackney and Islington, Paddington, and Chelsea, are excluded, though, as he says, "so near being united that they might without *any great impropriety* have been added to the list," and so *à fortiori* is the little country town of Kensington.

To turn to the map,—we now (1772) find bridges at Westminster and Blackfriars in addition to London Bridge. The Borough, of which Aggas' plan showed but the germ in a strip of houses near the Surrey end of London Bridge, has extended eastward to Bermondsey (then as now the head-quarters of the leather trade), and to Rotherhithe, and southward to Kent Street; but a so-called "Dirty Lane," near the King's Bench prison, is its limit to the south-west, and "St. George's Fields" and "Lambeth Marsh" have but a few scattered houses on them to represent St. George the Martyr's, Southwark, and all Lambeth,—two of the most thickly-peopled districts of modern London.

In the east,—to start from the river, the map just takes in Ratcliff Highway and the church of St. George in the East, that is, the district of

Wapping; but *The Survey* tells us that even at that time Shadwell, Lime-house, and Poplar, had grown up along the bank of the river (encouraged no doubt by the exemption referred to in the last chapter) and joined Blackwall to the metropolis. To the north-west of Ratcliff Highway (which appears in recent maps to have changed its name of ill-repute to St. George's Street) is an open space surrounded with houses marked Goodman's Fields;* adjoining it is Whitechapel, so called from St. Mary's, once a white-washed chapel of ease to St. Dunstan's, Stepney.† The town branches out again along the Whitechapel Road to Mile-end Old Town, "so called as being a mile

* "This ground," says *The Survey*, "though now covered with streets which are well inhabited, is still known by the general name of Goodman's Fields." Stow, writing two centuries earlier, remembered a farm there which had belonged to the Minoreess nuns (from whom the Minorities takes its name), "At the which farm I myself in my youth have fetched many a half-pennie worth of milk, and never had less than three ale pints for a half-pennie in the summer, nor less than one ale-quart for a half-pennie in the winter, always hot from the kine as the same was milked and strained. One Trollop, and afterwards Goodman, were the farmers there, and had 30 or 40 kine to the pail. Goodman's sonne, being heyre to his father's purchase, let out the ground first for grazing of horse, and then for garden plots, and lived like a gentleman thereby." Quoted by Noorthouck, p. 664.

† Id. p. 760.

distant from Aldgate," but between Ratcliff Highway and this road is a large area of open fields. The village of Stepney (originally Stebon Heath or Hithe) is outside the map, and outside the town, though the parish was "so amazingly increased in buildings" as to have even then "produced" eight other parishes, including St. Paul's, Shadwell, St. Ann's, Limehouse, St. Mary's, Whitechapel, Christchurch, Spitalfields, and St. Matthew's, Bethnal Green; it still retained the "hamlets" of Mile-End and Poplar. The mother-church has now upwards of fifty descendants.

To the north-west of the Whitechapel Road we come to Spitalfields, represented in Aggas' plan by open fields with bowmen practising archery. Great numbers of French Protestants had settled there after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, and had introduced what in Noorthouck's time were still "flourishing silk manufactures."* To the north-east of Spitalfields, is Bethnal Green, surrounded by fields, a secluded country green, apparently connected with London by only one narrow road joining Bishops-

* St. Mary's Hospital, from which the "fields" took their name, stood close to Spital Square, just to the east of Bishopsgate Street.

gate Street near Shoreditch Church, though three roads lead from the Green into the country. St. Matthew's, Bethnal Green, marks the extreme north-east corner of the town. Hackney is outside the map, Hoxton just within it. Further west, Clerkenwell (then as now the abode of watchmakers) bounds the town to the north; and the New River Head (the reservoir into which the New River delivers its supplies) is shown some half-mile to the north of it, and some half-mile south of the village of Islington.* Resuming our course to the west we see the Foundling Hospital standing alone in "Lamb's Conduit Fields," which are bounded to the west by "the Duke of Bedford's new road," corresponding to Woburn Place, Russell Square. "Bedford House" occupies the site of the present Bedford Place, but beside it is "the British Museum, late Montague House." Immediately to the north of both are open fields, through which runs "the *new road* from Paddington to Islington." Further west, "Lord Foley's house" and "Queen Anne's

* Persons arriving at Islington after dark on their way to London, used to stay the night there, we are told, last century, for fear of the footpads who frequented the intervening space.—Knight, iii. 130.

Square" (which was begun, but never completed) are keeping the ground clear for Portland Place. The names of Queen Anne Street and Harley Street tell their date. The winding course of Mary-le-bone Lane even in this map contrasts oddly with the straight streets amongst which it twists. Orchard Street has displaced the apple-trees (which no doubt preceded it) and Portman Square, which Noorthouck speaks of as in course of building, ends the town to the north-west a little short of "Tiburn Gate." This stretched across Oxford Street where the Marble Arch now stands. Between "Tiburn Street" (as the western part of Oxford Street is called) and Piccadilly the town of 1772 is wonderfully like our modern London. The stream of population was dammed up by Hyde Park, and had not yet branched off to either side of it. Park Lane bears the name of Tiburn Lane. The associations with Tyburn as a place of execution no doubt made the name unpleasant to "ears polite," and led to its disappearance. It is only of late that it has reappeared in the form of Tyburnia. To the south and west of Hyde Park and the Green Park, St. George's and two smaller hospitals are almost the only buildings marked; it was not till after 1825

that Belgravia and Pimlico sprang up, and linked Chelsea and Battersea to London.

The City of Westminster probably contained more houses in 1772 than it has done since the opening of Victoria Street and other improvements. The map shows us Old and New Pye Street, Stretton's Rents and Duck Lane,—names familiar to those who have interested themselves in Ragged Schools and kindred agencies; whilst Broad Sanctuary suggests the privilege which had first attracted vice and undeserving poverty to the neighbourhood of the Abbey Church. On the river "Priory Garden Sta.," "Whitehall Sta.," and other stations to the number of twelve, catch the eye, and indicate how important a means of communication Thames wherries were. When the embankment and underground railway are completed, we shall have stations again along the river-bank; but of another kind.

In the more central part of London "the Royal Mews" still occupied the site of Trafalgar Square, as in Aggas' map. It obtained the name, as *The Survey* tells us, "from having been used for the accommodation of the king's falconers and hawks so early as the year 1377; but the king's stables at Lomesbury, since called

Bloomsbury, being destroyed by fire in the year 1537," King Henry VIII. caused the Mews to be fitted up for the reception of his horses.* Hence the use of the name Mews for stables throughout London. "Spring Garden," which appears as a walled garden in Aggas' plan, has been built over in 1772. The chief difference from our modern maps in this part is the absence of Regent Street with its Circuses, and Portland Place; these with Regent's Park were not formed till 1813. New Oxford Street, too, is of course wanting. The traffic had to flow round by Broad Street, St. Giles; whilst between Broad Street and Great Russell Street is the notorious St. Giles' rookery, of which Church Lane—a miserable streetling, running parallel with and south of New Oxford Street,—is now the only remaining portion.

On the whole, building and population do not seem to have advanced very rapidly during the last century; it was not till quite the end of it that the growth of commerce gave the first impulse to that congestion towards the capital, which has gone on increasing till the present time.

In the south and east the increase during the

* Noorthouck, p. 724.

last seventy years has been continuous and rapid; Camberwell and Peckham, not to speak of Lambeth and Southwark, to the south, the Isle of Dogs and Bow, as well as Stepney and Bethnal Green, to the east, are now integral parts of London. The Isle of Dogs, a horseshoe-shaped peninsula, formed by a bend of the river, just to the south of Poplar, has now a population of more than 16,000 on it. According to Noorthouck, it got its name "from the great noise made by the King's hounds that were kept there during the residence of the royal family at Greenwich." In his time it was also known as Poplar Marsh, and its pastures were famous for raising the largest cattle in England, and for curing distempers. The West India Docks now occupy a considerable area at the neck of the peninsula; a broad fringe of population runs all round it, attracted chiefly by the ship-building yards, whilst the making of new docks in the centre is still further contracting the small area of pasture that remains. For civil purposes the Isle of Dogs is still a part of the large parish of Poplar, which joins it to the north; this is not generally a very poor parish, many London Unions have higher rates, but it is the head-quarters of the ship-building trade, con-

sequently the distress there for the last two years has been very great. To the north of Poplar, and to the east of Mile End New Town and Bethnal Green, Bromley and Bow have sprung up, and Spitalfields and Shoreditch have long since grown northwards into Hackney, and Clerkenwell into Islington.

It was about 1792 that building began in earnest on the Foundling Hospital and Bedford estates. Bedford House was pulled down in 1800, and Russell Square was then built. Between 1792 and 1803 no fewer than 922 houses were built on these estates, in the parishes of Bloomsbury and St. Pancras, by or for one enterprising builder, Mr. Burton.*

Building was going on at the same time in Somers Town, (so called from Lord Somers, the ground landlord,) and in other parts of St. Pancras. So early as 1791, Horace Walpole writes to Miss Berry, "Lord Camden has just let ground at Kentish Town, for building 1,400 houses." What is now called Kentish Town is to the north

* Dobie's *History of Bloomsbury*, p. 147. Mr. Burton after building more than 2000 houses in London proceeded about 1834 to form "a new town near Hastings," now known as St. Leonards on Sea, p. 149.

of the Regent's Park, and must in Horace Walpole's time have been nearly two miles from London, but perhaps the ground in question may have been in Camden Town, at the north-west corner of the park.

“The village called Marybone,”* says Noorthouck, writing in 1772, “may now be esteemed a part of this great town, though it is not yet included in the bills of mortality; as the connexion by new buildings is forming very fast.” Lisson Grove branched off from it to the north-west, between Regent's Park and Edgware Road, about the time of the opening of New Oxford Street, and is said to have afforded a refuge to some of the tenants of the demolished rookery. But the villas of St. John's Wood have occupied the airy ground to the north, and have effected a junction with Maida Hill and the terraces of North Paddington to the west, so that the colony of poor is confined to narrow limits.

It is amusing to read that in 1799 when a patrol of the Middlesex Light Horse Volunteers, after marching by the New Road to Paddington, and leaving old Paddington church on the right,

* Originally Mary-le-burn (the church of St. Mary by the brook), corrupted into Mary-la-bonne.

detached the left flankers to explore a lane leading from "Wesbourne Green" to Kensington Gravel Pits, they found the road very bad, and were obliged to come over some hedges to rejoin the main body in the Great Harrow Road ;* but as much might have been said at a much later time of the district to the west of Paddington. Of Paddington itself we are told in 1811 that, though "once at the distance of three miles, it has by the new buildings been *almost* joined to London."† Fifty-seven years have passed, and Kilburn and Kensal Green, two miles to the north and west of Paddington church, are as much parts of London as Paddington was then; our ears are even becoming familiar with the less frequent names of Brondesbury and Willesden.

The pig-feeding establishment, which is said to have removed some sixty years ago from the neighbourhood of the Marble Arch to Notting Dale, has long since been again surrounded by houses,‡ and though it is only within the last

* MS. Patrol-book. † *Ecclesiastical Topography.*

‡ I must refer such of my readers as do not already know the book to Mrs. Bayly's *Ragged Homes and how to mend them* (Nisbet), for a most amusing account of the way in which Lake, chimney-sweeper and scavenger, himself a fresh arrival from Tottenham Court Road, wel-

three years that the Notting Hill and Kensington Turnpike Gates have followed those that used to exist at the Marble Arch and Hyde Park Corner, London is at least a mile to the west of where they stood, and much more than that along the roads.

To the south-west the town is rapidly travelling out by Earl's Court and Walham Green to Fulham, and near Battersea a new town has come into existence within the last five years, radiating out from Clapham Junction to Wandsworth, Balham, and Brixton.

It is not easy to piece together the scattered notices that we meet with of the poor of London into anything like continuous history, or to make comparisons between their conditions at different times. It seems a universal rule now, alike in old and new countries, that every large town has its "sunken sixth,"*—a degraded class whom their

came the "west-end establishment" to his refuge, and how they were afterwards joined by a colony of brick-makers, from which the place got the name of the Potteries. The manners and customs of the community, and the fatal results of want of cleanliness and efficient sanitary superintendence, are no less forcibly described.

* It is said to have been ascertained in Glasgow that

fellow-citizens are very apt to look on as a mere nuisance. London has long had its sunken sixth. In Queen Elizabeth's time it seems to have had the same power of attracting waifs and strays which it has had ever since. The Recorder of London writes to Lord Burleigh, in January 1581, that the Thursday previous, "Her Majesty, in her coach, near Islington taking of the air," had been surrounded by "a number of rogues." He reports that the next day he took "seventy-four rogues, whereof some were blind, and yet great usurers and very rich;" and that on Twelfth-day he met the governors of Bridewell, and "examined all the said rogues, and gave them substantial payment." The following day, being Sunday, dining with "Mr. Dean of Westminster," he "conferred with him touching Westminster and the Duchy" (that is the Savoy, a Liberty of the Duchy of Lancaster), and then "took order for Southwark, Lambeth, and Newington," from whence he received a shoal of forty rogues. "I did the same afternoon peruse Poole's [St. Paul's], where I took about 20 cloked rogues that there use about one sixth of the population had reached a dead level at the bottom of the social scale. Hence the phrase. *Missing Link*, p. 273.

to keep standing. The same day the Master of the Savoy was with us, and said he was sworn to lodge ‘*claudicantes, ægrotantes et peregrinantes,*’ and the next morning I sent the constables of the Duchy to the Hospital, and they brought unto me at Bridewell 6 tall fellows that were draymen unto brewers, and were neither *claudicantes, ægrotantes, nor peregrinantes.*” On Friday above 100 more were brought to him. On Saturday he “found not one rogue stirring. Amongst all these things I did note that we had not of London, Westminster, nor Southwark, nor yet Middlesex nor Surrey, above 12 The residue, for the most part, were of Wales, Salop,” and other country parts; and “few or none of them had been in London above 3 or 4 months.” “The chief nursery of all these evil people is the Savoy and the brick-kilns near Islington.”*

From Queen Elizabeth’s time downwards St. Giles’ has been a haunt of poverty. Strype tells

* Ellis’ *Original Letters*, II. 283. “Several places which, in the times of popery, had been allowed as sanctuaries to criminals and debtors,” after the Reformation pretended to a privilege of protecting the latter. Stat. 8 & 9 William III., c. 27, contains provisions against such pretended privileges of the Savoy, Whitefriars (*Alsatia*), the Minorities, and some other places. Noorthouck, p. 284.

us that "when London began to be very populous, there was a confluence [to it] out of the countries of such persons as were of the poorer sorts of trades and occupations;" who, "because they could not exercise them within the jurisdiction of the City," followed them in the suburbs. These "suburbians," besides making bad commodities to the wronging of the people, appear to have occasioned "divers other inconveniences." "Therefore the Queen commanded all persons to desist and forbear from any new buildings within three miles from any of the gates of the City; and to forbear from letting, or setting, or suffering any more families than one only to be placed in any house."* In this proclamation, dated 1580, it was set forth "that great multitudes of people were brought to inhabit in small rooms, whereof a great part were seen very poor, yea, such as must live by begging or worse means, and they heaped up together in one house or small tenement." In 1640 (in which year the churchwardens' accounts begin), Irish poor are first named in the parish books of St. Giles's, and about the same time "persons that have families in cellars" are named with "divided tenements" amongst abuses to be

* *Strype's Stow*, Bk. iv. 32.

presented by the beadles. By a later entry directions are given as to "discovering and avoiding inmates, *sellermates*, and new-comers."*

But, just as London is chiefly mentioned in Saxon times in connexion with its fires, so the masses of the population are chiefly referred to under the Tudors and Stuarts in connexion with plagues and famines. "One time with another," says Sir W. Petty, "a plague happeneth in London every twenty years." The plague of 1592 led to the establishment of the weekly bills of mortality. These were returns of deaths made by the parish clerks, to enable the court and others to judge when it became expedient for them to leave town. In the plague of 1603 more than 36,000 persons are said to have died, in the plague of 1625 above 35,000, and in the last great plague (1665) 68,596, and there is some reason to believe that in the last case the figures are below the truth.† How much suffering and distress amongst survivors these numbers suggest! Some effort was no doubt made by the richer classes to assist the victims of these recurring calamities, but the help they could give must

* Dobie's *History of St. Giles' and Bloomsbury*, p. 195.

† *Introduction to Population Returns*, 1831.

have been quite out of proportion to the need. Stow, indeed, writing in 1591, counts it amongst the "commodities of cities," that "the necessity of the poor and needy is in such places both sooner to be espied, and hath means to be more charitably relieved," and says that London, in particular, "relieveth plentifully and with good policy, not only her own poor people, a thing which scarcely any other town or shire doth, but also the poor that from each quarter of the realm do flock unto it."* How this was done I am not able to say; the passage seems to refer to some practice peculiar to London, so must mean something different from the poor-law system then newly introduced. We meet with occasional notices of such voluntary charity, as is probably here intended, at a later time; thus we hear of the Lord Mayor and the Archbishop of Canterbury remaining in the city and at Lambeth respectively during the Great Plague, to minister to the wants of the poor people, and large subscriptions were paid into their hands for this purpose, the King contributing 1000*l.* a-week.

We get more details about the poor during the last century, and especially about "the dan-

* Stow's *Apology*, p. 206.

gerous classes." Under the Tudors these were kept well in hand. "In the year 1575," says Strype, "Westminster, the Duchy (that is, the places about St. Clement's and the Savoy), St. Giles's, High Holborn, St. John Street, and Islington, great harbours for such misdemeaned persons, were never so well or quiet, for rogue nor masterless man dared not once appear in these parts."* Under Anne and the Georges these classes seem to have had their own way. Lawlessness becomes the chief characteristic of London life. Notices of murders and robberies, of houses falling down, and of deaths from starvation, seem to have been at least as frequent in the new streets of the London of a hundred years ago, as in those of our much larger city; whilst the audacity with which criminals defied authority, and with which mobs of sailors and others took the law into their own hands, is different in kind from anything which this century has seen. Nearly all the chief haunts of degradation and vice in modern London were then in existence, and others that have since disappeared. The neighbourhood of Westminster Abbey and the Savoy, Drury Lane and St. Giles's, both sides

* Strype's *Stow*, Bk. vi. 435.

of the Fleet Ditch, parts of Moorfields and Shoreditch, Ratcliff Highway, and the Mint in Southwark, with the streets adjoining them, were in the possession of a class whose hand was against every man. It is hardly too much to say with a writer in Knight's *London* that during last century "the honest and opulent portion of society appear like small islands, encircled and separated by the ramifying arms of this sea of destitution and hunger for the goods of others." * Our day has its own evils to contend with, and chief amongst them those resulting from the overhasty expulsion of the poor to make way for different local improvements, but the growth of manufactures and the demand for labour on one hand, and Sir Robert Peel's Police Act on the other, have been means (amongst others) of preventing the destitute and criminal population from increasing in proportion to the growth of the town, and of keeping what there is of it in order. There are few courts or alleys now into which a stranger or a single policeman may not go with perfect safety.

* Knight's *London*, ii. 352. See this paper for much information about the state of London in the middle of last century.

CHAPTER IV.

CHURCH-BUILDING MOVEMENTS PREVIOUS TO 1856.

IN any account of religious and charitable agencies in London, the first place is clearly due to the parochial system. It is a form of that "system of locality," which Dr. Chalmers held to be "the only principle, on which a crowded town can be brought under a right and efficient system of management." * From early Saxon times England has been divided into parishes; and tithes, which were no doubt at first a voluntary offering, had, long before the Conquest, become a compulsory payment for the support of the parish clergyman. The territorial division seems to imply that all parishioners have an equal claim on their clergyman, and (as a general rule) an equal right to seats in their parish church; on the other hand, the parishioners should not be so numerous but that the pastor may know

* *Life of Dr. Chalmers*, ii. 320.

and visit all who will accept his services ; and, in case of an increase of numbers, means should be provided for increasing the church accommodation, for supporting additional clergymen, and, if necessary, for dividing the parish. We may take parish churches as representative for our purpose of the more important parochial system.

London within the Walls has, from very early times, been amply, or rather excessively, supplied with churches. But from the reign of Queen Elizabeth another, and a much larger, London has been growing up outside the walls. Over a small part of this the Lord Mayor's jurisdiction was extended ; and it became part of the City, which received its last addition by a grant of Smithfield and Moorfields, from Charles I. in 1638. But the suburbs had, in the meantime, been increasing rapidly, so that by 1665, as we have seen, there was thought to be as large a population in these and Westminster, as in the City.* This suburban London seems at first to

* London within the Walls extends over about 370 acres ; London without the Walls (that is, the rest of the City), over about 330, I believe ; the walls and gates were pulled down the middle of last century, and the distinction

have been the creation of the poor rather than of the rich ; it grew up without recognition, in spite of Government proclamations, and little seems to have been done for it up to the time of the Fire, in the way of subdividing parishes, or building churches.* When the Great Fire had devoured its eighty-nine parish churches, attention must for a long time have been concentrated on replacing them, to the neglect of the suburbs, and especially of the poorer parts of them. The parishioners and others contributed willingly to the work of restoration, and Sir Christopher Wren superintended the building of no fewer than fifty-three churches, whilst he had St. Paul's in hand. All but two of these were in the City. Later times might have learnt something from this "first church-building movement."† Wren

has ceased to be of any practical importance. The whole Metropolis is returned in the Census Tables of 1861, as extending over 77,997 acres.

* Christ Church, Southwark, was built 1630, or soon after that, and the parish was constituted by Act of Parliament, 1670. St. Paul's, Covent Garden, was built 1645 sup. p. 26); St. Paul's, Shadwell, by Thos. Neale, Esq. 1656 ; St. James', Piccadilly, by the Earl of St. Albans and others, in the reign of Charles II., but it was not consecrated till 1684.

† *Quart. Rev.*, cix. 420.

built in the style of his day, but he never lost sight of two important considerations, that congregations should take an intelligent part in the service, and that there is a happy medium between parsimony and extravagance even in church-building. "In our reformed religion," he wrote, "churches are to be fitted for auditories;" he paid much attention to the arrangement of the interiors, and his churches are better adapted for seeing, speaking, and hearing in than many which are more pleasing to the eye. Most of his churches cost from 5000*l.* to 7000*l.*, some as little as 2000*l.*, none more than 16,000*l.*; and it is to be remembered that he was rebuilding the churches of what must even then have been some of the richest parishes in the world.

The year 1710 saw the completion of St. Paul's Cathedral, to the building of which certain coal-duties had been devoted. The following year "a petition from the parish of Greenwich to the House of Commons, for assistance in building their church," to quote Noorthouck, "started a consideration under the great increase of the Metropolis, what churches might be wanting for the accommodation of the inhabitants; in which the convocation and the queen concurred; and

it appeared that the suburbs of London contained 200,000 people more than could possibly resort to the churches already built." * Various Acts were passed in consequence in the reigns of Anne and George I., and commissioners were appointed, and were directed to apply the coal-duties of the years 1716–1724 to the building of fifty new churches (one to be in the parish of East Greenwich) and to the maintenance of the ministers. Old Sir Christopher was appointed a commissioner, as was Robert Nelson, the author of *Fasts and Festivals*, but Wren died in 1723, Nelson about the same time, and the undertaking was carried out with little vigour and little regard to the extent of the want. Some of the money voted, in spite of well-conceived protests from the Archbishop of York and others, was devoted to

* Noorthouck, p. 300. In 1696, Gregory King had calculated that there were more than 405,000 persons living in thirty-eight parishes outside the Walls. He calculated that there were 149,500 in the sixteen parishes (immediately) without the Walls, 154,000 in fifteen out-parishes, 103,200 in seven parishes belonging to Westminster. None of these probably would have more than one church. The number within the Walls he estimated at 72,900, and there were ninety-seven parishes; these contained about fifty-seven churches—many parishes having been united after the Fire.—*Observations*, p. 35.

rebuilding old churches, which were too small or out of repair, like St. Martin's (1726) and St. Giles' (1723). On the former no less than 37,000*l.* was expended, on the latter 8,436*l.* St. Mary le Strand (1723) was built in the place of a church which had been removed by Protector Somerset when he built Somerset House. St. George's, Bloomsbury, and St. George's, Hanover Square, both finished in 1724, were at any rate centres of new parishes, taken off from St. Giles' and St. Martin's respectively. St. George the Martyr, Queen Square, had been built in 1706, as a chapel of ease to St. Andrew's, Holborn, but was adopted and made a parish church by the Commissioners. St. John the Evangelist, Westminster, St. Anne's, Limehouse, St. George's in the East, Christ Church, Spitalfields, and St. Luke's, Old Street, with its fluted obelisk for a steeple, were also built by them. The names are of some interest as showing the parts of the suburbs that were considered most to need church accommodation at the time. No more than eleven were ever built. The "excessive charge," to quote from an Act of the fifth year of George I., soon made it evident that the original grant would be quite insufficient for its object, and a fund of

360,000*l.* was granted (in addition to the coal-dues of 1716-19), to be paid in instalments of 21,000*l.* a-year. When this was expended, the Commissioners closed their labours, and it is said that from the beginning of the long reign of George III. (1760) almost to its close there were not six new churches erected in the Metropolis.*

A strange torpor seems to have come over London at this time, there was comparatively little building of any kind going on till 1790, and the population was not increasing rapidly, but, of course, the arrears of church accommodation which were acknowledged at the beginning of the century were increasing rather than diminishing. From 1790 to 1820, London was again growing fast, but it was not till near the end of this period that any marked effort was made to supply the want of churches. Some of the church-builders seem even then to have been little alive to its urgency; 60,000*l.* was spent on Marylebone Church in 1813-17, and no less than 76,679*l.* on new St. Pancras in 1819-22! Happily others saw somewhat more clearly what was wanted. Parliament was prevailed on, in 1818, to grant a million (to which another half million was after-

* Knight, v. 202.

wards added) for building churches throughout the country, as a thank-offering on the termination of the war, and in the same year the Incorporated Church Building Society was founded, to build, enlarge, and repair churches. Both movements were intended for the benefit of the country generally, but London had its share of attention. The Commissioners appointed to administer the Parliamentary grant, of whom Joshua Watson was one, began by laying down a rule that they would not spend more than 20,000*l.* on any one church. This was a liberal maximum, but it was an improvement on the proceedings of their predecessors, and they generally kept well within it. Eighty-five churches swallowed up the first million,* but they must have husbanded their remaining funds, for they are said to have built, or helped to build, 520 churches in all,† and to have provided (chiefly by pew-rents) for their endowment.

Amongst those built in London were churches in Bethnal Green, Hackney, St. Pancras, Battersea, and several others in the poorer parts. They contributed more than two-thirds of the outlay on

* *Religious Worship Report*, 1851, p. xl.

† *First Report of the Church Commissioners*.

All Souls, Langham Place, St. Mary's, Bryanston Square (1830), and some others in comparatively rich neighbourhoods.* So early as 1825, Daniel Wilson persuaded the Vestry of Islington, then a parish of 30,000 persons, to vote a sum of 12,000*l.* to meet them, and in consideration of this the Church Commissioners built three churches there.† But it was not till the greater part of the Parliamentary grant was expended, that any considerable contributions were obtained from the public for either town or country.

The reports of these Commissioners having drawn attention to a much greater want of churches in the diocese of London than they were able to supply, in 1836 Bishop Blomfield inaugurated a fresh church-building movement, by establishing the Metropolis Churches Fund and appealing to the public for subscriptions. He had prepared the way for this by taking an active part in the various church-reforms of the preceding years, including the arrangement, made the same year, for re-distributing church property through the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, to whom he had himself given up sinecure patronage at St. Paul's to the ex-

* *Parliamentary Returns*, 1825, 1837.

† *Life of the Rev. D. Wilson, Bishop of Calcutta*, i. 245.

tent of 10,000*l.* a-year. Without going into details, I may say that the result of the effort was, that, instead of the fifty churches at first contemplated, sixty-eight were built by the Fund at a cost of 136,787*l.*, before it was merged, in 1854, in the Diocesan Church Building Society. A special Fund, too, of which Mr. W. Cotton was the chief promoter, was opened, in 1839, for Bethnal Green, and by 1850, "Bethnal Green, instead of two churches, possessed twelve,"* with clergy, schools, Scripture-readers, and district visitors in proportion. The new districts were endowed, though not as liberally as might have been wished, "out of the revenues of the suppressed prebends of St. Paul's."† "Islington, St. Pancras, Paddington, and Westminster, all owe their present provision of churches to local associations which were suggested or stimulated" by the Metropolis Churches' Fund.‡ Bishop Blomfield consecrated in all no fewer than 198 churches during the twenty-eight years of his episcopate, of which 107 were in London.§ The whole number of churches in *the diocese*, ten years ago,

* *Life of Bishop Blomfield*, i. 242.

† *Id.* p. 227. ‡ *Id.* p. 245.

§ *Quarterly Review*, cix. 435.

was only 498. This shows how large a proportion the addition made in his time was. Yet London all that time was growing faster than churches were being built; something was done permanently to improve the distribution of them, and to strengthen the hands of the clergy, but the disproportion between the population of the town, as a whole, and the number of churches, was absolutely increasing. Before going on to speak of more recent efforts to correct this, it will be convenient to refer to some of the many supplementary agencies which are at work in the same field.

CHAPTER V.

ON SOME OF THE RELIGIOUS AGENCIES AND
CHARITIES OF LONDON.

MOST persons find it difficult to fix mere names in their memories, and the number of the Charities that one hears of in London, makes it difficult to distinguish between one and another, as well as to recollect them. I propose to refer shortly to the origin and objects of some of the most prominent, with a view to assisting any of my readers who may need help in getting clear notions about them.

First after the parishes, in order of time, come the Hospitals. St. Bartholomew's, Smithfield, was founded so far back as 1123, with the Priory of the same name, by Rahere, "a pleasant-witted gentleman," as Stow calls him, of the court of Henry I., "for the relief of one hundred sore and diseased persons;" St. Thomas's Hospital, Southwark, in 1553, out of the

confiscated property of the monasteries. These, with Guy's Hospital, founded, in 1721, by Thomas Guy, a wealthy bookseller, are the three great endowed hospitals of London. To these have been added twelve general, and a crowd of special hospitals, besides numerous local dispensaries.* All these twelve general hospitals are supported, in the main, by subscriptions, and most of them are crippled by want of funds, and are obliged to fall back, again and again, on a small number of staunch supporters. This ought to be known, for there can hardly be any Charities, the usefulness and claims of which are more generally acknowledged. The usual practice at these hospitals is, to give advice and medicine gratuitously to all the poor who come as out-patients, but only to take persons in who have a Governor's or subscriber's letter. At King's College Hospital a subscription of a guinea entitles to one such letter of recommendation. The Royal Free Hospital, Gray's Inn Road, with one or two others, has no such letters, but

* I need hardly say that, in writing a chapter on the above subject, I have frequently had occasion to turn to Mr. Sampson Low's alphabetical *Handbook to the Charities of London* (price 1s. 6d.). I recommend it to my readers as a book of reference.

receives all suitable cases till its beds are filled; this, and the fact of there being no school of medicine in connection with it, make the Gray's Inn Road Hospital very popular with the poor; but I believe a patient may be sent to any one of these general hospitals with confidence that all will be done for him that high medical skill and good nursing can do. The nursing in most of them is now superintended by ladies, if not conducted by them.

The pressure on the accommodation of these hospitals forces them to send patients out almost as soon as they are able to leave their beds, but a poor man is seldom fit to go straight back to his work, or even to the roughness of his every-day life,—hence the need of convalescent hospitals. Some such have been long in existence, especially the Metropolitan Convalescent Institution, which was founded in 1840, and sends upwards of 2000 patients to Walton-on-Thames every year. But during the last attack of cholera attention was strongly called to the need of more. It would be well if every hospital could have a home for convalescents in connection with it.

Amongst the Societies of London the first

Place is due to the venerable Society for promoting Christian Knowledge. It was founded in 1698, and was, for the greater part of last century, the only School, Bible, or Tract Society in London, as well as the only Missionary Society; since then many associations have sprung up to assist or compete with it.

The first Sunday School was established in 1781, by Mr. Raikes, a bookseller, at Gloucester, but it is said that no such school was started in London till 1798; this was followed ere long by a vigorous movement in favour of general education; a few years later George III. ventured to hope, in talking to Dr. Lancaster, that a time might come "when every poor man in his dominions would be able to read his Bible;" and the British and Foreign School Society, founded in 1805, and the National Society, founded in 1811, have done much towards bringing about this desirable result. The former, which originated with Dr. Lancaster, assists schools which profess to give a Scriptural though undenominational training; the latter, pursuing Dr. Bell's system, is strictly in connection with the Church of England. Few know how much leeway education has had to make up of late years. So late as 1837,

the Statistical Society is said to have ascertained that, in the east of London, only about one in twenty-one of the population received any education at all; and in 1843 Dames' schools were still "to be found in all parts of the metropolis," the education in which amounted to little more than "keeping children out of the streets."*

We have seen something of the state of the poor in London in the last century; nothing could be much worse, but I can find little trace of efforts to help them in their own homes till within the last sixty years. The Strangers' Friend Society is the most notable exception to this that I know of, though no doubt there were good Christian people, amongst both clergy and laity, going about in earlier times to do what individual effort could for the bodies and souls of their neighbours. The Strangers' Friend Society was founded in 1785, by a Dr. Gardner, a friend and follower of John Wesley. His object was to assist the sick and distressed poor of the Metropolis, and especially such of them, as, from being strangers in London, were not entitled to parochial relief. It began in a very small way, many of its subscribers contributing only a penny a-week. It

* Knight's *London*, vi. 17.

has now about 400 unpaid visitors. It has divided London into twenty-five districts, and has a sub-committee and resident visitors in each. Nothing can be better in theory than such an organization, but the Society has never been strong enough or rich enough to make much impression on the poverty of London. Its yearly income (derived altogether from subscriptions) averages less than 2000*l*. It gives relief without reference to the religious tenets of the poor; and, if its managers are willing to co-operate with other similar associations, their experience, and the number of their workers, will, no doubt, enable them to play a most useful part in any general effort that may be made for the temporal relief of the poor.

To the British and Foreign Bible Society belongs the credit of one of the next efforts to get at the homes of the poor. The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge had sent a large number of Bibles to Wales in 1780, but was not able to meet a second demand some years later. This led to the foundation of the Bible Society in 1804. Auxiliaries were formed, before long, in Southwark and Bloomsbury; and in 1813 and 1814 systematic house-to-house visitations were made in both districts,

to ascertain how far the poor were supplied, or wished to be supplied, with Bibles. "Among 3600 persons in six of the poorer districts of Bloomsbury and south St. Pancras, only thirty Bibles were found, being a proportion of one book to twenty-eight families."* A large proportion of those who did not possess Bibles were able to read, and proved their desire to have them by expressing "willingness to pay for them if the purchase-money were collected by degrees."† These visits were at first paid by gentlemen, then ladies came forward to help in the work of collecting subscriptions and supplying Bibles; and we may well believe that, in the words of the Bible Society's Report for 1814, "the perfect knowledge thus acquired of the great mass of the population immediately gave birth to many institutions for the relief of their temporal necessities, the clearest comment on the sacred volume."

The first District Visiting Society of which I have heard was founded in 1812, in connection with St. John's Chapel, Bedford Row, of which Daniel Wilson, afterwards Bishop of Calcutta, was then minister. Gradually District Visiting Societies have become a recognised part of paro-

* *Book and its Missions*, ii. 129. † *Id.* p. 127.

chial machinery. These societies deserve the credit of having first attempted to obtain a thorough knowledge of the wants of the poor, and to bring about systematic intercourse between them and some of their richer neighbours. The visitors are generally ladies; each visits the poor of her district from house to house; she has some small amount of relief to distribute in winter, and in summer she encourages her people in prudence by collecting their savings for the Provident or the Clothing Club. They serve, too, as a channel of communication between the poor and the clergy. Almost every parish in which there are any well-to-do residents now has its District Visiting Society; but in too many cases the number of visitors is quite insufficient; so that either the districts have to be made too large or the clergyman finds himself more or less in the position of a friend of mine, who told me, some months after entering on a very poor cure in the south of London, that he had twenty-eight districts for visitors, but that twenty-seven were hopelessly vacant, and the twenty-eighth was taken by his wife!

The foundation of the London City Mission in 1835 is another epoch, as introducing paid lay agency. The object of this Association is to send

religious teaching by means of paid lay agents to the London poor. It divides London, or so much of it as its funds will reach, into districts containing about 500 poor families, and places a paid lay agent in each to visit from house to house, under the direction of a superintendent, who is in some cases the clergyman of the parish, or the minister of a nonconformist chapel, but more generally a layman. They have now 351 missionaries; of these 319 visit districts; the rest attend to certain classes of men,—the police, night and day cabmen, drovers, sailors, the frequenters of public-houses, and others. Many of them are men of the true missionary spirit. When the missionary to the Fever Hospital had himself at last been prostrated with fever, the Committee sent one of their general superintendents to see him, and to arrange about a change of duty, but the missionary would not hear of giving up his post, and there, I believe, he still labours on. The journals of the public-house missionaries prove great courage and singleness of mind. The missionaries are forbidden to make themselves the channels of temporal relief; cases of great want they are directed to bring under the notice of their superintendents. They are mostly men little, if at all,

above the artisan class, but many of them are well fitted to influence others. Their failing, as a body, is a tendency to self-assertion. This is not an uncommon fault in men of more energy than cultivation; and these men are often especially laid open to it, by being placed under lay superintendents, who have not time to go much amongst the poor themselves, and can, therefore, exercise but a very general kind of control.

The City Mission, like the Bible Society and the Bible-women, who have done so much good lately under the fostering care of the Bible Society, is undenominational; that is, it assumes that there is a Catholicity and unity of the Church of Christ beneath the differences that separate the many Christian churches of our day, and that this essential unity affords a sufficient basis to co-operate upon, so far at least as the Church of England and those who are commonly called Evangelical Dissenters are concerned. How far it may be expedient to carry such co-operation is a further question. Some argue, that in speaking to our home-heathen it is a positive advantage to put our differences to one side, and to speak to them in the first place of those fundamental truths which we hold in

common. And certainly the poor are quick to perceive a proselytizing spirit, as distinguished from a simple desire to do them good. Others think it best that Churchmen and Dissenters, as a general rule, should work independently, but make an exception for the Bible Society, and say with the present Bishop of London, that they gladly accept the opportunity it gives "of going heart and hand with many from whom otherwise we are much separated." Others do not admit the postulate, that differences on points of order and church government *are* less essential than differences of doctrine, and decline to cooperate on this ground. In any case, it should be remembered that the City Mission, like most of the other great undenominational societies, was founded in no spirit of opposition, but out of a genuine desire to remedy great evils, before the corresponding Church of England Societies existed,* and I would ask those who are most tempted to resent the intrusion of the agent of

* The London City Mission was founded in 1835, the Church Pastoral Aid Society (the first Church of England Society which employed paid lay agents) in 1836, and the Church of England Scripture Readers' Association in 1844. So the Bible-women of 1857 suggested the Parochial Mission of 1860. The irregulars strike out the new path, which is

such a society into their pastoral charge, to consider, whether his case may not be analogous to that recorded by St. Luke, of the man casting out devils in the Saviour's name but following not with His disciples. If they had done nothing else, the missionaries would deserve well of us for the facts they have brought to light with reference to the state of the London poor. I need offer no further proof of this than the Annual Report for 1867. It should be read by every one who takes an interest in the condition of his poorer neighbours.

In 1837 a City missionary in Westminster brought together a number of ragged children to educate; this was the first "Ragged School" in London, but the example was soon copied, and in 1844 the Ragged School Union (1 Exeter Hall) was formed for mutual support and encourage-

then more systematically occupied by the regular troops. But members of the Church of England have very largely assisted in these undenominational movements, and where a clergyman is willing to co-operate with these Societies, his wishes with reference to the choice of an agent are attended to, so that there ceases to be any marked difference between their working and that of a Church of England Society, as far as that parish is concerned. It is provided by the Rules of the City Mission that one half of the committee shall be members of the Established Church.

ment. There are now upwards of 200 schools in connection with it in London and its suburbs, in the teaching of which, on Sundays, more than 3000 voluntary teachers take part. Many of these have industrial classes attached to them, by means of which thousands of neglected street-boys are enabled to become useful members of society at home and in the colonies. A similar purpose has been served by the Shoe-black Societies, the first of which (Red) was formed by some of the promoters of the Ragged School Union in 1851. There are now seven such societies, besides a Roman Catholic Society, named after St. Vincent de Paul, each with its own district and uniform. The original society, which occupies the central district, is self-supporting. Its seventy boys bring in earnings to the amount of 2000*l.* a-year; and about a fourth of the money, which is retained by the Society, pays the superintendent's salary, the rent of a house, and all working expenses.

“Refuges” for children differ from ragged schools in supplying those whom they take in with board and lodging as well as with teaching, and Reformatories do the same for children convicted of crime or committed by a magistrate.

Refuges are often combined with ragged schools, and have often grown out of them. The well-known St. Giles' Refuges for Homeless and Destitute Children grew out of a ragged school, begun in 1843, over a cow-shed, by a City missionary and a few working men. The Committee of these Refuges has now 160 boys and nearly 100 girls in its different homes, besides 150 boys in the training ship Chichester, and they have recently purchased a farm in the country (following in this the example of the Boys' Home, Regent's Park Road), where more than 100 boys are to be trained to agricultural labour.

Refuges and reformatories are the boarding-schools of the destitute and criminal class. The Reformatory and Refuge Union (24 New Street, Spring Gardens) was formed in 1856, as a centre of advice and assistance to both. It has also a Female mission fund. Night-refuges, like those in Play House Yard, City (1819), Field Lane (1849), and Newport Market (1866), differ from those I have been speaking of, in being intended for men and women as well as children, and in providing accommodation for the night only.

It was not till 1857 that the first Bible-woman began to visit in St. Giles's. Every per-

son interested in the very poor of London should be acquainted with the papers in the second volume of the magazine called *The Book and its Missions*, which are connected with, and in some sense were, the origin of the Female and Domestic Bible Missions. The organization now numbers 230 paid agents, each with her district and lady superintendent, and expends, with scrupulous economy, some 11,000*l.* a-year, exclusive of between 6000*l.* and 7000*l.*, which is paid to it in instalments by the poor themselves for Bibles, clothes, and bedding; but ten years ago it was represented only by one "good, grave middle-aged woman," offering Bibles for sale by weekly subscriptions to a "class of persons below the decent poor," penetrating for this purpose at some personal risk into courts, the very existence of which she had never known before, "though living near them five-and-twenty years," and returning when her day's work was done to wash the children or tidy the room of some sick woman, whose acquaintance she had made in her rounds.* The lady, who has in

* The substance of these papers in *The Book and its Missions*, was reproduced in *The Missing Link, or Bible-women in the Homes of the London Poor*. The periodical is now carried on under the name of *The Missing Link Magazine*,

God's providence been the main instrument of calling out and directing this agency, from the first put forward, as one motto of the Mission, "Help the poor to help themselves." This has on the whole been consistently adhered to, the efforts of the poor themselves have been encouraged, not superseded, whether they wanted Bibles, bedding, or cooking utensils; and yet, probably, no agency has gone so deep down amongst the adults of the really degraded class with the result of raising so many out of it. It is to be hoped that the various district missions will be equally consistent in adhering to another of their principles;—not to remain content with the circle of more or less reformed characters, which each, from time to time, collects around it, but to pass them on to church or chapel, and always to go down again, like true followers of Him, Who came to seek and to save that which *was lost*.

One of the most important results of this work is, that it has brought many ladies (as superintendents and friends of superintendents) into contact with a class of poor, which, without the Bible-women's co-operation, they would hardly have thought of visiting.

The Bible-woman, though often superintended

by the clergyman's wife, or by some other lady with his sanction, is not necessarily a parochial agent, or even a member of the Established Church, hence it was thought desirable in 1860 to form the Parochial Mission Women Fund. The mission woman, in spite of her name, is in most cases less of a missionary than the Bible-woman, her sphere is the easier, but hardly less useful one of assisting the clergyman in his pastoral work, and there is plenty for her to do in the best organized parish. This Association does not send its agents into any parish without a written application from the incumbent, who selects both the agent and her lady superintendent. It has now about 100 agents at work in London and the suburbs, and about thirty more in different parts of the country. Nearly 7000*l.* was deposited with them by the poor for different purposes during the year 1866. The Association has a Nurse's fund in connection with it, to provide trained and Christian nurses for the poor. At present this is but small; it is much to be hoped that the work may grow and prosper. The subscription lists show that this and the Mission Women Fund benefited in 1866 to the amount of 165*l.*, by the profits of Sir Roundell Palmer's well-known *Book*

of Praise. The Bible Mission is also collecting money to send nurses out from a Central House to tend some of the sick poor, whom the Bible-women meet with, in their own homes.

About 1856, different causes, of which Mr. Spurgeon's example was the most marked, led to various efforts to bring preaching to bear on the masses. First came the Exeter Hall services in 1856-7; then the Bishop of London's week-night services for working men, and the sermons in the nave of Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's; lastly the Theatre services. The services in Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's have been very useful in giving large congregations, chiefly of the middle class, opportunities of hearing our ablest preachers, but the theatre services alone can be said to have reached a new stratum. The Committee, who have arranged these, say, that it was with great reluctance that they decided to hold services in so incongruous a place as a theatre, but they felt strongly the importance of proclaiming the glad tidings of our religion in some place to which the very poor would come, and no other equally suitable could be found. For eight winters clergymen of the Established Church and Evangelical Non-conformist ministers have been holding services in

several of the smaller theatres during the winter months; and they have certainly thus got at a class of the population, which it would have been difficult, if not impossible, to draw into any ordinary place of worship. Thousands of the very poor of London trace a change of heart and life to these services.

The Pure Literature Society is a good example of an agency set on foot just when it was wanted, and able consequently to do much good with small means. It confines itself to selling books, and does not publish like the Christian Knowledge and Religious Tract Societies. Some young barristers, who saw how much the circulation of such periodicals as *Reynolds' Miscellany* was increasing, established it in 1854, to help forward the *British Workman* and other cheap publications of a wholesome kind. Its agents have made systematic inquiries at most of the small periodical shops in London, and in many other parts of England and Ireland, as to the stock kept, and have had much success in inducing these shops to advertise, and keep, a better class of literature. It issues a well-selected and comprehensive catalogue of books from time to time, classifying them as suited for villagers, sailors, and so on, and keeps

these books for sale at its depôt, 11 Buckingham Street, Adelphi. By the liberality of Mr. Charles Buxton, who is one of the Committee, it is further enabled to meet applications for libraries from working men's clubs, hospitals, and other institutions with a free grant of books, equal in value to those purchased.

Young Men's Societies are another class of agencies which have done much good in London. The Young Men's Christian Association, and the Church of England Young Men's Society, were formed in the same year, 1844. The former, though undenominational, has exercised a very powerful influence for good. Nearly 200 young men may be seen on Sunday afternoons taking part in the Bible class at the central rooms (165 Aldersgate Street); and most of them, I believe, are led to undertake some work of Christian usefulness. A still larger number benefit by the comfortable reading-room, the French and other classes, and the lectures, of the Association. It has twelve branches in different parts of the town, some of which, especially the West branch (48 Great Marlborough Street), are very well supported. The Church of England Young Men's Society was established principally

to interest young men in home and foreign missions. It now takes a wider range, and offers members opportunities for self-improvement through a library, reading-room, and educational classes, at 169 Fleet Street. It has fifteen branches in other parts of London and the suburbs. The Islington branch has been very successful. It has lately taken a lease of Canonbury Tower (once the property of the Canons of St. Bartholomew, and, in later times, the residence of Lord Bacon and Goldsmith), in order to obtain larger rooms; and in a circular issued on the occasion, it is stated that the association has for some time been self-supporting, and that out of 200 members on the books, more than half are teachers in Sunday-schools, or engaged in other lay work, such as night and ragged schools, and penny banks.

There are still three societies, about which a new-comer interested in the poor of London may especially wish for information. The Society for the Suppression of Mendicity (13 Red Lion Square) was founded in 1818. It furnishes its subscribers with tickets to give to persons begging in the streets; its officers inquire into the cases of persons presenting these tickets, and

members of the Committee take it in turn to be present at the office, part of every forenoon, to hear the result, and to decide what assistance shall be given. Work is offered in some cases, and in winter bread and soup are given to almost every person bringing a ticket. It employs constables to arrest professional beggars, and prosecutes them. It is much to be wished that branch offices could be established in different parts of the town; for it is too much to expect of a man or woman, who may really be in want of food, that he or she should walk three or four miles to have their cases inquired into, with the prospect of being told to return next morning. Another branch of its operations, the Begging Letter Department, is most useful. Any subscriber of two guineas a-year may send them applications from begging-letter writers to investigate. I have myself applied to them, and have seen them produce a whole packet of letters extending over twenty years and more, in the same hand-writing, and telling much the same story as a letter that I had taken with me; and have heard from them how far the facts corresponded with the writer's account.

The Metropolitan Visiting and Relief Associa-

tion (21 Regent Street) was established after a meeting held at London House, in December 1843. Its object is to distribute the contributions of charitable persons in such parts of the town as most need them, by means of the clergy and their district visitors, but with the condition attached that relief is to be given without regard to the religious belief of those who are in want. I have referred before to the usefulness of district visiting societies; this Society has done much to strengthen them, and to call out both pecuniary and personal relief in the poorer parishes. It distributed nearly 10,000*l.* to 150 districts in the winter of 1866-7, besides making a considerable special effort during the Cholera. The Association is for the diocese of London only, but it has frequently made grants to its poor cousin the South London Visiting and Relief Association (6 Bridge Street, Southwark), which was established in 1851 for that considerable part of London which is in the diocese of Winchester.

The Society for the Relief of Distress (28 King Street, St. James's) was founded during the winter of 1860; when great distress in parts of London had called out the sympathy of the public, and had provoked criticism on an apparent want

of simplicity and economy in the management of some charitable associations. The distinctive features of the Society are, (1) that a committee guarantee the expense of management, so that all the money entrusted to them by the public goes directly to the poor; (2) that the Society's almoners, as a general rule, themselves take relief (which is given in the form of orders on tradesmen) to the poor; and (3) that it is absolutely undenominational, the almoners being directed to put themselves in communication with the ministers of all denominations equally, and with any other persons likely to give them trustworthy information. In 1866-7 this Society distributed more than 7000*l.* through 120 almoners. It has done much good by enlisting the sympathies of officers and others, who had probably not taken much part in relieving distress before, and by bringing them into personal communication with the poor. It is also a great benefit to the clergy, as well as to the inhabitants, of the poorer districts, that the almoners should undertake part of the labour of visiting. But there is great need of more almoners. The districts assigned to them, at present, are so large, sometimes including two or more parishes

or parochial districts, that it is very difficult, if not impossible, for them to do their work thoroughly. Where there is any sufficient local organization the almoners may be of great use in times of exceptional distress, but in the poorer districts the difficulty is, to find the needy cases at the right time, before they have lost their health, and their self-respect; and here, a single almoner, with a district of 10,000 or 20,000 people, himself perhaps living at a distance, can do very little. This Society will investigate cases of distress in any part of London for a subscriber.

I have only mentioned a few of the most prominent Metropolitan societies; but I have said enough to show that there is no lack of organized agencies for supplying both the spiritual and bodily needs of our poor. Yet the result is exceedingly unsatisfactory. In some places the poor are over attended to, whilst in others they are allowed to starve in soul and body. There is no sufficient understanding between the different agencies, and consequently there is a want of system, and thoroughness, in the way the work is done. Englishmen are always inclined to trust to energy instead of method, but the need of organization is becoming so evident, that we may perhaps hope for in-

creasing co-operation in future, so far, at least, as the physical wants of the poor, and especially the temporary but recurring distress of winter and spring, are concerned. It appears to me that we are in urgent need of some large and efficient voluntary organization to supplement or rather to co-operate with our poor-law system. I hope to show in a later chapter that such large voluntary organizations have worked well elsewhere, and may work well in London. I will only add here, that such an organization must evidently be undenominational, first, because it is important, in the interest of straightforwardness, to prevent the poor from supposing that religious professions will procure them material help; secondly, because it is essential that it should, if possible, gain the good will of all existing sources of temporal relief, and should offer a basis on which the largest possible number of competent men may be willing to act. Any other basis would certainly perpetuate the present want of system, under which three bottles of brandy have been known to find their way within a few hours to one cholera patient, whilst, very probably, a neighbour in equal need may have got none.

With reference to the religious instruction of

the poor, on the other hand (and with reference, in the absence of any satisfactory organization for that express purpose, to their temporal relief also), I would urge all members of the Church of England to support the parochial system. Fallen human nature, it has been often said, must have the glad tidings of Christianity taken to it, it will not go in quest of them. The system of parishes under which some ordained minister is made primarily responsible for every soul, gives the best hope of so carrying home the invitation. The clergyman and his congregation are a ready-made organization of the best kind for this purpose, and gain strength from being a part of a much larger organization. It is the positive side of the system that I admire, the less the negative and exclusive side is brought out the better. I should add that it is of the positive side almost alone that I have had personal experience. I have always found parish clergymen willing to accept lay help, and I have rarely known of anything like a wanton unwillingness to allow attempts to do good by others in a London parish. If a clergyman hinders the efforts of his people instead of encouraging them, he must not be surprised if

some work independently of him. And, looking facts in the face, I cannot but see that clergymen, like other people, are sometimes inactive, and sometimes hold views, which are, to the best of my judgment, unscriptural; this being so, I am glad that there are independent agencies which neither law nor professional etiquette can exclude from teaching their people. But, as a rule, I have faith in the system, and in the men who administer it; it seems to me the only agency capable, humanly speaking, of doing the great work of evangelizing the masses thoroughly and permanently.

CHAPTER VI.

CHURCH EXTENSION DURING THE LAST TEN
YEARS. PERSONAL WORK.

It is not fair to charge upon the parochial system results which have arisen from the non-extension of that system. For 200 years, as we have seen, the population outside the walls of the old City went on increasing, and, partly from causes peculiar to London, partly from sluggishness in the Church at large, no proportionate efforts were made to provide the new-comers with religious instruction. It was not till 1818 that any vigorous effort was made to grapple with the evil. Since then the "spiritual destitution" of parts of London has never been altogether lost sight of, though, to judge from the measures taken to remedy it, and the support accorded to them, the Church of England has hardly yet opened its eyes to the full extent of the evil.

In 1858 the Report of the House of Lords'

Committee on "Means of Spiritual Instruction in the Metropolis," furnished much valuable information on the subject. The "Religious Worship Returns" of 1851 had pointed out that sittings ought to be provided for about fifty-eight per cent of the community, and that the churches and chapels of all denominations in London only provided seats for a little more than twenty-nine per cent, of which, again, the Church of England, it was stated, only provided for eighteen. The evidence taken before the House of Lords' Committee filled up this outline, and showed how very unequally neighbouring districts were supplied. St. Pancras, which in 1811 contained 46,333 inhabitants, now contained 200,000, and was increasing at the rate of 4000 a-year; something had been done by the local Church Building Association to meet this increase, but there were still three districts with only one clergyman to upwards of 10,000 souls; and as a climax there was one district, Somers Town, containing about 12,000 inhabitants of a very poor class, for which, in consequence, it was said, of an omission in an Act of Parliament, no clergyman at all was responsible. The vicar of the mother church voluntarily paid a curate a small

stipend, to look after its most pressing wants. No one was surprised to hear that St. George the Martyr, Southwark, was very insufficiently supplied with churches and clergy, or that its "moral and social condition," and especially that of the Mint and Kent Street, was very bad indeed; but it must have been painfully surprising to many, to hear that the poor of some of the richest parishes were almost as badly off. Thus the parish of St. James', Piccadilly, with a population of 27,000, a large proportion of them poor, had only 1400 free seats for adults; many of which were, no doubt, occupied by the servants of the richer parishioners. St. Clement Danes, holding an intermediate position between the very rich and very poor parishes, with a population of 17,000 (10,000 of whom were too poor to pay rates), had three clergymen with one church, and 150 free seats for adults! The evidence taken before the same Committee went to show that, whilst the cures of the London clergy had been increasing, their stipends had, in many cases, been materially diminished. Burial-fees had, in some cases at any rate, been recognised in the Acts of Parliament constituting new parishes as a part of the endowment; but the Burial Acts,

excellent measures in themselves, took all such fees away, and gave no substantial compensation to the losers. The rector of St. Clement Danes stated that his clear income from his living, after paying part of the stipend of one of two curates, was only 190*l.* a-year, and this arose mainly from Easter offerings, themselves voluntary and uncertain. The living had lost from 150*l.* to 200*l.* a-year by the Burial Acts. St. Giles' had lost 700*l.* a-year out of 1200*l.* from the same cause; and it is notorious that, owing chiefly to this, several of the large London parishes can only be accepted and properly worked by men with considerable private means.

The Committee came to the conclusion that at least 600 more clergymen were wanted in London, but declined to recommend any grant of public money. It had become clear at last that it was not fifty or a hundred churches that would supply its wants, and that it was by voluntary efforts, if at all, that the arrears must be made up.

A writer in the *Quarterly Review* took no more than a common-sense view when, after stating that "a thousand additional churches with a single curate to each would barely suffice, all over the Metropolitan district, to assign 2000 persons

to the care of one clergyman;" he urged that Churchmen should, for a time, suspend all desire to build new churches in poor neighbourhoods, and should devote themselves to building or procuring rooms which would serve as schools during the week, and as places of worship on Sundays. Each of these to be the centre of a population of about 2000 souls and to have its resident missionary curate." *

In November, 1862, the present Bishop of London took the opportunity of a Charge to his clergy to call attention again to the wants of the diocese. Thanks chiefly to Bishop Blomfield, it was no longer possible to point to a parish with only "one church and *one clergyman* for 40,000 people," † or to four parishes "with an aggregate population of 166,000, church-room for only 8200, and eleven clergymen," ‡ or, on the other hand, to numerous proprietary chapels, the ministers of which had no pastoral charge. Much had been done to remedy these gross inequalities; but the Bishop had still to tell of "as many as eighty-two

* *Quart. Rev.* cix. 456.

† Speech of Bp. Blomfield on "Ecclesiastical Duties and Revenues Bill" of 1840. *Life*, p. 226.

‡ "Report of Church Commissioners," quoted *id.* p. 233.

parishes, with populations varying from 10,000 to 38,000, with only one church for each parish, and with a most inadequate supply of clergy.”* This was followed, in May 1863, by a number of land-owners, employers of labour, and others, meeting at London House, and agreeing that an effort should be made to raise the sum of 1,000,000*l.* in ten years “for the spiritual wants of the Metropolis and its suburbs.” The Bishop of London’s Fund, which was thus established, is an attempt to clear off some part of the arrears, which, as we have seen, have been accumulating for centuries.

In some respects it has great advantages over any previous effort. The Ecclesiastical Commissioners, though they materially assisted Bishop Blomfield in endowing his new churches, seem for some years afterwards not to have had any large surplus to dispose of; but in 1864 they published a scheme by which they undertook, amongst other things, to appropriate a fixed sum yearly to the permanent endowment, with 200*l.* a-year, of new churches, to which districts with a certain population should have been assigned. The

* Appendix to Charge, referred to in *Second Report of Bishop of London’s Fund*, p. 8.

The numbers, which were at first fixed at 8000, have since been reduced to 4000. This offer, made of course to all England, has greatly facilitated the work of the Fund.

In other respects, too, it has been able to use more direct methods to attain its objects, than former efforts. In them, the increase of clergy and other parish workers appears to have been, to a great extent, governed by the number of handsome churches which money could be found to build and endow. The Committee of the Fund distinctly recognise the principle that the clergyman and the congregation should precede the material church. I could have wished that the plan suggested by the *Quarterly* had been more closely followed, with the modification, perhaps, of placing two clergymen in a district of 4000, rather than one in a district of 2000, wherever the district was to be separated from the mother parish; but the necessity of a church, as a qualification for the Ecclesiastical Commissioners' grant, and the temporary character of the Fund, made it a great object that each district should get its church without much delay. As many Mission districts as the money contributed allowed of, however, were at once occupied, and no time was

lost before a clergyman was put in a position to begin work.*

The Fund has a third advantage over previous movements in drawing its agents from a larger field. Till lately it has been too much the habit in the Church of England, to assume that the clergy alone are concerned with the spiritual welfare of others; whilst at the same time social necessities or customs have, in great measure, confined ordination to the higher classes of the community. Few would, at any time, have maintained that the capacity for passing on the truths of the Gospel, any more than the capacity for receiving them, is confined to any one class, but the Church of England acted for centuries as if it were. Within the last thirty years, however, she has learnt to make large use of paid lay agency

* In their first Report the Committee expressed a wish to make a trial of a plan suggested by the Rev. Charles Girdlestone, which was not unlike that of the writer in the *Quarterly*. He advised that in very poor districts operations should be begun by securing a dwelling-house for the clergyman and his family, and "attaching to it, or providing not far off, a room that could be used for a school, Bible-classes, and for simple services." The want of funds has hitherto, I believe, prevented them from carrying out the precise scheme, but several of their missions have virtually been commenced in this way.— See *First Annual Report*, p. 18.

drawn from the lower classes, and nearly every missionary clergyman sent out by the Bishop's Fund has his Scripture Reader and Mission Woman to strengthen his hands.

The management of the Fund has been chiefly in the hands of laymen. Great pains were taken to obtain accurate information as to the wants of the diocese, and to devise the most direct and effectual way of supplying them. The Fund has, as far as possible, made use of existing agencies. The Diocesan Home Mission was founded in 1857, at a meeting of clergy called by the Bishop, to find clergymen with special qualifications for missionary (as well as pastoral) work, and send them to take charge of such districts as were most in need of such work. In 1863 the Society had only ten such missionary clergy on its books, but it had gained much experience and information. The Fund has enabled it to send out thirty-four others, on the express understanding that these are to be in addition to those at work before. Similar grants are made annually to the Diocesan Church Building Society, to the Scripture Readers' Society, and to others, subject to conditions which ensure their being applied to new work. Much has been done, too, to meet local efforts in needy dis-

tricts, and much also to initiate such efforts in the districts which seemed least able to help themselves.

In many of the poorest districts of London a school church may now be seen,—sometimes a temporary iron building,—more generally a large room,—used for one purpose or another, morning, noon, and night. It is a centre for work amongst some 5000 or 6000 people; the missionary clergyman and his assistant (if he is so fortunate as to have one) live near at hand in such quarters as they can get. They have their Scripture Reader and one or two Mission Women, the latter superintended by the clergyman's wife, or some lady in the neighbourhood. During the cholera of 1866, and the slackness of the ship-building trade these two last winters, it was a great blessing that some of the poorest parishes had been thus subdivided, and their working power increased. The neglected district of 12,000 in St. Pancras, before referred to, was one of the first to be taken in hand. It lies just to the north of the Euston Road, between the Euston Square and King's Cross Stations, and is said to contain now some 14,000 people, in spite of a slice having been taken off its eastern extremity for

the new Midland Station. The houses are mostly small, many of them two storeys only, the people nearly all poor, living in single rooms. The Diocesan Church Building Society had already secured a large room in it, once a Baptist Chapel, close to the notorious Brill Market, and had a missionary curate at work there. The Fund enabled them to do some very necessary repairs to the room, so that the school now held in it, to which between 300 and 400 children come, is enabled to get Government help; they also sent an assistant clergyman, a Scripture Reader, and a Mission Woman, to assist the first clergyman in his very up-hill work. At the same time they originated a fresh mission in the western half of the district, sending two clergymen and a Scripture Reader to try to reclaim the 7000 people in that part. Of these, probably even more than of any other mission districts, it might be said, in the words of the first Report, that "habits of Christian worship had never been learnt, or were forgotten; children were left without Christian baptism or education; and with numbers the Christian Creed, nominally accepted, was hardly more than a remote and indistinct memory." The second mission was for some time carried on

under great disadvantages in part of an ordinary dwelling-house; but a site has now been given by Lord Somers for a permanent church; and the Fund having made a grant of 1700*l.* towards the building of it, a single liberal friend has undertaken to make up the sum necessary to complete the church for 1200 people and schools for 600 children.*

In contrast to this old district (though it is not much more than a century since Stukely, rector of St. George the Martyr, Queen Square, but better known as an enthusiastic antiquarian, talked of the "beautiful fields of the Brill," with their "three or four sorry houses," and fancied that he saw traces of a Roman camp there), let us glance at what the Fund has done in Bromley, a new district in the extreme east of London, with a rapidly increasing population. A building for church and school purposes was erected in 1862 by the late Lord Ellesmere to relieve the mother church, St. Leonard's, and (the great extent of work in this one building making it urgently necessary) the Fund has assisted to build a permanent church for the same district; but this subdivision of the parish (St. Michael's)

* *Occasional Paper*, No. II.

had itself a population of 16,000 in 1865 (as many as the whole parish contained ten years before); the Fund has, therefore, assisted in forming a part of it into a mission district (St. Gabriel's), with clergyman, schools, and lay agents, and has secured sites in it for a permanent church and schools. Another mission district (St. Andrew's) has been formed out of St. Leonard's; and sites for church and schools have been secured in yet another part, as it is probable that the land will rise in value. Thus there are now four centres of work, and preparations for a fifth, where a short time ago there was but one.

The Fund has done much to secure sites by request and purchase in many of the neighbourhoods where the population is increasing. How far the ship-builders and dock-owners, for whose benefit chiefly it is, that labourers throng to Bromley, have done their share in providing for the spiritual wants of the population, I am not able to say; but the managers of the Fund always endeavour to call out such aid, and often with success.

Much the same story might be told of All Saints', Poplar, and Christ Church, Isle of Dogs. Much has been done by the Fund in conjunction

with great private liberality in Greenwich, much in Plumstead, Woolwich, Deptford, and other districts to the south of the river, which, since the death of the late Bishop of Rochester, have become a part of that diocese. They have been handed over in a much more satisfactory state, as regards machinery, than they would have been in, had the Bishop of London's Fund not been formed. At the end of 1865, the Fund had originated fifty-nine mission districts, and had adopted or assisted nineteen others. Its receipts in the first complete year of its existence (ending December 1864) were a little above 100,000*l.* This was a good beginning, but there was plenty more work to be done. The Committee had then pressing claims from fifty more parishes before them, and a Sub-committee on Statistics had reported that there were 211 parishes in the diocese insufficiently supplied with clergy, or church-room, or both, and this to such an extent that about a million persons must be considered to be unprovided for by any religious body.* Unhappily, the receipts for the following twelve months fell short of 50,000*l.*, and those for 1866

* See *Report of Sub Committee on Statistics*. Rivingtons. 1864.

only amounted to 41,089*l.*; consequently, the Committee have been unable to undertake much new work, and have thought it right to devote themselves rather to consolidating what had been begun. To clear off any considerable part of the debt that has accumulated, and “to place the diocese in a position in which the resources of the parishes, with the help of the permanent societies, would provide for the population,”* requires a strong and united effort. Many individuals have given liberally; it is to be hoped that, as the objects of the Fund become better understood, a much larger number will contribute, according to their means; a very small rate on house property in London would raise what is asked for each year at a single levy; and it is not for Christians to consider too nicely whose duty it is to supply the wants of a neighbour in obvious need.

The contributions to Bishop Blomfield’s Fund fell off in a similar way after its first effort, but it then gained fresh life from the assistance of local associations. Large local associations were formed early in the existence of the present Fund, so cannot now be looked to, to give it a fresh im-

* *Second Annual Report*, p. 16.

petus, but something may perhaps be effected by a further application of the same local principle. The Bishop's last appeal urges that every parish and district should have its own association; and that contributions should be sought from all classes. Now a great many well-to-do parishes contain some poor district, which much needs a missionary curate or a school-church to itself. Might not the clergy and others interested in such districts take this occasion to make an effort to obtain whatever is most needed for them? The name and machinery of the Fund will be found to be of some use, and when the object is the benefit of their own or some neighbouring street, it will be easier to apply for the pence of the poor, and rich and poor alike will give more liberally. On the other hand, where no such attempt is made, the existence of a comparatively neglected district near their doors is apt to close people's purses against appeals for distant or general objects. It is no small advantage in the scheme of the Fund, that it can not only be brought to bear on local as well as general wants, but that it allows each donor to strengthen that kind of agency which he thinks most important; his money may be given through it for churches,

school-churches, clergy or lay-agents, just as he thinks one or the other most needed.

The Bishop of Winchester's Fund is a similar effort to supply the spiritual needs of that part of London which belongs to the Diocese of Winchester.* This includes Lambeth, Southwark, and most of the very poor district lying to the south of the Thames, and to the west of Deptford and Greenwich. It is said to contain more than half a million of inhabitants.

St. George's Mission, in the Parish of St.

* This is also known as the South London Church Extension Fund; information about its operations can be obtained from the Lay Secretary, Mr. Heald, 160 Fleet Street, E. C. Everything that tends to separate a poor part of London from the richer part is to be regretted, but the existing arrangements appear to have been made after much consideration. In 1846 an Order in Council placed "the Metropolitan District," whether in Middlesex, Essex, Kent, or Surrey, under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of London, but this was not to take effect as to Surrey till the death of the present Bishop of Winchester. In 1863 this was all changed, and an Act was passed, in consequence of the recommendations of a Royal Commission, providing that the Metropolitan parishes in Essex and Kent should be added to the See of Rochester, at the death of the then Bishop, and that the Metropolitan parishes in Surrey, with the exception of St. Mary's, Newington, and its districts, which have always belonged to the Diocese of London, should remain attached to the See of Winchester. *The London Diocese Book* for 1867, p. 2.

George's in the East, and St. Alban's Mission, Holborn, are not in connection with the Bishop of London's Fund. The former claims the credit of having been the first "Mission" of the Church of England. In each, what may be called official working power is concentrated on a specially degraded and vicious population by means of unmarried clergymen residing together in a clergy-house, and a sisterhood co-operating with them in work amongst the poor. Schools and other ordinary parochial agencies are set on foot, but extreme stress is laid on Church-services, and generally the teaching approximates to the Roman Catholic type. It was in 1856, that the Rev. C. F. Lowder and three other clergymen commenced operations, with the rector's permission, in a part of St. George's in the East. In 1857, a sisterhood took up their residence in the same parish, and have, I believe, worked most admirably and indefatigably. Three or four years later, a similar mission was established in connection with the new church of St. Alban's, near Holborn, the Rev. A. H. Mackonochie coming from the St. George's Mission to take charge of it. Whether the teaching in these churches is within the limits allowed by the Church of

England is a question which much needs to be settled at law, just as its accordance with Scripture is a matter of serious responsibility to the individual judgment; my own opinion is, that it is not in accordance with Scripture, and will, therefore, do more harm than good in the long run; but no religious man can do otherwise than lament the unreasoning prejudice, which showed itself in the St. George's in the East riots, and has, I believe, shown itself again, in some measure, at St. Alban's. Christian charity teaches us gladly to admit and honour the self-devotion and energy of these gentlemen and ladies, and, if we are called to oppose them, to do it with temper and on principle. It may be worth while to add that the Guild of St. Alban's has no connection with this church. It was in existence before the church was built, and is a lay association with a provost and other officers for the promotion of "Church-work" (in the very High Church sense) throughout the country, and especially for enlisting laymen in such work.

The work done by Protestant Dissenters among the poor of London is too large a subject to enter upon here. Those who wish for statis-

tics on the subject will find them in an article in *The British Quarterly* for January, 1866. It is there stated that Nonconformist places of worship in London provide accommodation for 357,976 persons.* Their richer congregations do much by means of district missions and in other ways for the evangelization of the poor, and in point of personal effort through Sunday-schools and home-visiting, most of their congregations stand well. Without at all admitting that the "Church of England in theory is a clerical corporation and not a New Testament Church," and that it therefore "cannot and does not take its proper share" in the great work of preaching the Gospel to the poor, we may allow that the constitution and circumstances of most of their Churches are well calculated to keep their members in mind of their individual responsibility, and we shall do well to imitate that willingness to employ the gifts of their lay members of all ranks, which has done so much to strengthen and unite them.

* According to the Returns of 1851, the Church of England then provided sittings in London for 409,834 persons. These, according to the article quoted above, had increased to upwards of 500,000 in 1865.

In the Letter to the laity, in which the Bishop of London announced the establishment of the Fund, he expressed his hope that the laity of both sexes would give increased personal assistance to the clergy, in supplying the spiritual and temporal wants of the poor, and invited any who would enlist under his directions to send in their names to him. This has had some result, though not as much as might have been wished. Many ladies have joined the Ladies' Diocesan Association, and have so been put in the way of doing good personally. It has been the means of sending some to visit in workhouses and hospitals, and others to take part in ordinary parochial work. This was formed in 1864, and now numbers upwards of 100 members. But ladies are not so much behindhand as gentlemen in their personal service; many are working most heartily for the poor as superintendents of Bible and Mission women, as district visitors, and in other ways. Men, and gentlemen especially, are doing very little in proportion to their numbers. In 1865, a similar association was formed for men. It was resolved, at a meeting at London House, that it was desirable to organize "a body of laymen of all classes, under the Bishop, to

assist the clergy gratuitously, especially those of poor and populous parishes, in various branches of their parochial work." The Association of Lay Helpers now numbers about 200 members. Some of these are fresh workers, but the greater number of them were engaged in parish work before they joined it. I need hardly add that they are not a tithe as yet of the lay helpers of London. I shall have occasion to return to this Association in my next chapter.*

Such an association may do something towards enlisting men, but the calling out of fresh working power must rest mainly with the parish clergy. I would urge them to speak more frequently and strongly to their congregations on the duty of personal intercourse with the poor; and I urge it mainly on this ground, that I am sure that they can never bring their congregations, or members of their congregations, on to any advanced position of Christian holiness without some such personal work. A skilled worker often finds it easier to do his own work than to train others to do it, but the training of others is its own reward in the long run, and, in this particular

* See Appendix for its rules and some extracts from its circulars.

case, it is clearly a part of a clergyman's duty to his congregation to assist them to follow the example and obey the commands of Him, whom he sets before them. Where, as in some of our West-end parishes, a clergyman has not work enough for his congregation in his own district, I would still urge him to press this duty on his people. Some he may put in communication with neighbouring clergymen; others may find something to do near their places of business; others again, who have time to spare, may co-operate with the clergyman of some needy out-lying suburb. The Lay Helpers' Association offers a ready means of ascertaining where help of any particular kind is needed. If any clergyman hold back from the fear that laymen, if persuaded to take part in spiritual work, will work in a self-willed way, I would suggest to him that the men of whom this would be true are most of them at work already; the only difference is that in the absence of their clergyman's sanction they are forced into an independent and irregular course. If such men were judiciously advised, and had a little rein given to them till they had gained experience, even they might, many of them, become useful parish workers.

Surely the theory of a Scriptural Church is that all members should exercise their gifts freely, though in due subordination to one another. Till this is carried out into practice we are at a disadvantage in comparison with those communions, which hold that the work of Christ's Church is to be done mainly by certain orders of persons, clerical and lay; for their less spiritual system has advantages over ours, in the inducements which it can offer to persons, both to consecrate themselves to God's special service, and to contribute to the support of those who have done this.

Words used by the old historian of London, with a different reference, are applicable to this subject. "The method we have now learned, of compounding by money for personal service, has the most pernicious tendency, and is one of the worst consequences resulting from our present luxury."*

* *Noorthouck*, p. 291.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PAROCHIAL SYSTEM IN LONDON.

IT has been said that the parochial system is not a missionary system, and that it is therefore ill adapted to do such work as is now required of it in London. It was, no doubt, originally pastoral, rather than missionary; and, in point of fact, much of the mission-work of the Christian Church in London has been done, as we have seen, independently of it, though a great deal of good home-missionary work has been quietly done under it, both recently and at former times. But I cannot see that, when once the need of missionary or evangelizing work is distinctly recognized, there is anything to prevent its being grafted on to the parochial system; and it is the only system which seems at all competent to gather up and preserve the results.

Nothing can be much better than the theory of it, even in its application to London. Pic-

ture to yourself a zealous, energetic incumbent, in charge of a parish or district, containing from 4000 to 6000 inhabitants, amongst whom we will assume that all classes are more or less represented. He has his one or two churches, and his schools, both for the poor, and for a somewhat higher class who can pay from sixpence to a shilling a-week. He has his curate or curates, and his paid lay-agents—a Scripture-reader, and a Bible-woman or mission-woman. But he endeavours to find some useful work for all of his people who will undertake work. He divides the poorer part of his parish into small manageable districts, and gets a lady or gentleman to visit the families in each district, as a friend or neighbour rather than as a teacher, thus ensuring some intercourse between rich and poor. He obtains some teachers for his Sunday-school from all classes, but most of his male teachers are clerks or tradesmen; he finds that they are more painstaking and more regular in their attendance than men in a higher social position; one evening a-week, if possible, he has them at his house, and talks over the lessons to be given the following Sunday. Other parishioners he interests in his Young Men's Sc-

ciety, his Workman's Club, his Associations in aid of Foreign Missions, or of the Bishop of London's Fund, or for other purposes. His own time, and that of his curates, is given, as much as possible, to the spiritual wants of his people; for the temporal relief of the very poor amongst them, so far as he has to take charge of it, he relies chiefly on his district visitors. He has a meeting of them also once a-month, and would rather give some pains to advising and helping them, than to doing their work for them. Some of them are experienced and judicious, others are still learners; all report to him what they give out of parish-funds; when any of them are ill or from home he is informed of it, and one of his curates or some one else takes their place. He cautions them against too frequent visiting, and, above all, against pauperizing their poor friends, and through them and his lay-agents hears where he is particularly wanted. Still, his aim is to know all his flock, and, as time allows, he is constantly visiting rich and poor on some methodical plan. An annual printed address, accompanied by full accounts of the monies that have passed through his hands for the various charities, which he sends to all heads of families, helps to strengthen

the *esprit de corps* in the parish, and gives him an opportunity of furnishing such information on parish matters as could not well be given from the pulpit.

So much for the ideal, and it is an ideal to which not a few metropolitan districts make a tolerably near approach.* But there are too many in which it is still quite unattainable. The great difficulty that the system has to contend against, is not merely numbers, but numbers together with a separation of classes. It is true that even in the more central parts of London where there is some intermixture of classes, there are still parishes so large, containing from 15,000 to 30,000 people, that they are like dioceses rather than parishes; and that in these, if a clergyman endeavour to add a thorough acquaintance with his people to a bishop-like supervision of his agents, his health is pretty sure to give way under the strain. It is true too, that in the city there are parishes so small that all the resi-

* See an interesting little pamphlet, *Five Years in Kent Street* (Hatchard), for an example of the working of the parochial system under very disadvantageous circumstances; and the annual addresses of the late Rector of St. Giles' (Rev. A. W. Thorold) for its work in a very large parish.

dents in the parish would not furnish a tolerable congregation for the parish church. But in both these classes of cases, the remedy is comparatively simple. In the city more parishes may be united, as some have been already,* whilst in the northern and west central districts, the large parishes may be subdivided; or (if it seem better to keep a few such as spheres for men of more than usual power of organization) the incumbent may apportion them out to his different agents. But what is to be done to make the parochial system efficient in the east and south of London, where a clergyman is set down with perhaps a curate and a lay-agent or two, to minister to 10,000 or 15,000 persons, all of the poorer class, so that it is very difficult for him to get any sufficient help amongst his own people either in the way of voluntary agency or of money? Readers of *The Times* may remember how, three or four winters ago, a well-known clergyman wrote that but one family in his district kept a cook, and that was his own; and I heard lately

* St. Benet's, Gracechurch Street, and St. Mary's Somerset, have been pulled down under the Union of City Benefices Act, and are to rise again from their ashes under the same names in Stepney and Hoxton respectively. *Third Report of Bishop of London's Fund*, p. 17.

of a clergyman telling a friend that there was not a family in his district whom he could ask for a shilling, and not a family who would not be glad to accept one from him. On the other hand, in the west, there are often so few poor in a district that there is great risk of their being spoilt and pauperized; and in some cases an incumbent can neither find work for willing hands, nor use for the contributions of his congregation within his own territory.

The thing wanted evidently is a better distribution of money and of working power. Much has been done towards the distribution of the former by Diocesan and Metropolitan Societies, and parishes, as such, have of late been doing something to help poorer parishes. We sometimes hear of West-end clergymen lending their pulpits to their brethren from the East end that they may state the wants of their parishioners; St. Mark's, North Audley Street, is reported to have formed an alliance with St. Mark's, White-chapel; and in several cases rich congregations have undertaken to send large contributions annually to certain poor districts at a distance. Paid working power is thus indirectly provided, voluntary workers are not so easy to send. In the

main, each parish must, no doubt, rely on its own voluntary working power ; and it is encouraging to hear, from an experienced clergyman, that in his opinion 'there can be no parish in which some fellow-helpers may not be found.*' But occasional help is not without its value. For instance, in the letter to *The Times*, to which I have referred, the writer said, that the fact of the Almoners of the Society for the Relief of Distress coming and taking assistance themselves to the persons, whose names he wrote down for them, made their grant of money much more valuable to him than it would otherwise have been. As railways make it easier to get from one part of London to another, it is to be hoped that such occasional assistance will be more easy to get. One of the objects of the Diocesan Association of Lay Helpers is to distribute voluntary lay-agency, as other Central Societies distribute funds. It takes the parochial system as its basis, but it does not assume that every one willing to help must work in the parish in which he happens to be residing. The Secretaries are glad to receive the names of any men who are willing to make themselves

* Rev. R. Gregory, *Organization of a Poor Metropolitan Parish*, p. 32.

useful, with a statement of the sort of work which they wish to undertake, and the time that they have at their disposal, and will do their best to put them into communication with clergymen who want such help as they can give. The applications for help from clergymen have hitherto been far more numerous than the offers of help from laymen: yet there must be a number of men of leisure, resident in London, some of them qualified, by experience and business-like habits, to give invaluable assistance to an over-worked clergyman in some out of the way neighbourhood; and there are still more, not calling themselves men of leisure, who might give an hour or two a-week to assist a clergyman near their place of business, if help be more wanted there than near their own homes. Ladies are already doing much to assist the poorer neighbourhoods. In some cases a lady supports a Bible or Mission-woman in some distant parish, and keeps up friendly intercourse with her local Superintendent, who may be the wife of the clergyman, or of the medical man, or of some respectable tradesman. So, too, I have heard of an invalid lady providing materials for "mothers' meetings" to make up, and dinners for children, who would otherwise have

had none. Sometimes "carriage ladies," as the poor call them, undertake to visit Hospitals and Workhouse-wards, in the less accessible parts of London, and the object is well worth some expenditure of time and trouble. Indeed, to borrow a hint from the Bishop of London's first Charge, it is a good deed for all of us to inform ourselves as to the means there now are for getting to the poorer parts of London, and to take opportunities of improving our acquaintance with them. Isolation makes men sociable, so that a very slight pretext for calling is sufficient to secure a welcome from an East-end clergyman; and I can assure those who do not know it, that Victoria Park, with its shrubberies, and Miss Burdett Coutts' beautiful Drinking Fountain, is well worth a visit. Not that it is always necessary for the inhabitants of rich parishes to send their money or their sympathies to a distance; they may often find poor districts very near them. I have heard a Chelsea incumbent complain that Belgravia seemed to think that Bethnal Green was the only place that needed help; and certainly charity, though it should not end at home, should begin there.

To return to the parochial system, in its ap-

plication to London. Of course its machinery admits of endless variations and adaptations. In some West-end parishes the temporal relief of the poor is taken out of the hands of District Visitors, and entrusted to a paid Almoner. He is in constant communication with the District Visitors, and other parish agents, (in some parishes the clergy and their agents meet each other daily at a fixed hour); at the same time he comes to know much of the poor himself, and learns to distinguish between cases that should be relieved by charity, and those which should be left to the Poor-law. The plan is said to work well. One good effect is greater fairness in the distribution of relief in different parts of the parish. Another is, that the District Visitor ceases to be looked on as a mere relieving-officer, and is in a better position for becoming the friend and adviser.

In a district to the south of the river, where District Visitors are not to be had, paid female agents of a somewhat higher class than Mission-women are employed with very good results.* In other poor districts hearty voluntary help is given by working men, as Visitors. They are

* *Five Years in Kent Street.*

in a more independent position than small tradesmen; and are, in some respects, better able to visit and dispense relief. They can give some time to this after work-hours. "Education and good social position," says Mr. Gregory, "are not the only qualifications for fellow-labourers in the cause of Christ. Religious earnestness is a more powerful instrument for fashioning the hearts of men for this work."*

Still it must, I fear, be admitted, that it is the exception, not the rule, for the clergyman of a London parish to attain to anything that can be called thorough supervision of his people. Perhaps we may consider the possibility of events of importance taking place in the families of his parishioners, without the knowledge of the clergyman, as a test of the sufficiency of parochial machinery. Most well-worked parishes in the country would stand this test; but comparatively few in London. We hear too often of deaths from physical starvation. Spiritual starvation must be much more frequent, and opportunities for judiciously administering help to bodies and

* *Organization, &c.*, p. 31.

souls, at critical times, are probably missed as often as they are taken.* When first I came to live in London I used to tell persons, who begged of me in the streets, and professed to be only in temporary distress, to go to their clergyman, or to some one who knew them, not to come to a person who knew nothing of them. I still think that more harm than good is done by indiscriminate charity; and that we should aim at bringing about systematic intercourse between rich and poor, so that every deserving person should have some one to whom he could go for advice and help, before he is brought to extremities by illness or misfortune; but I know now that even respectable persons may not unfrequently be reduced either to begging, or to utter destitution, and may know no

* Southey, in his *Life of Wesley*, speaking of a time of spiritual distress through which Wesley's follower Nelson passed, says, "A judicious minister might have given him the comfort which he sought, but the sort of intercourse between the pastor and his people, which this would imply, hardly exists anywhere in England, and cannot possibly exist in the metropolis where Nelson then was." Coleridge wrote opposite to this in his copy of the book, 'Is this true? And, can the Church of which it is true be a Church of Christ?'—*Life of Wesley, with Notes by S. T. Coleridge*, i. 254.

one better off than themselves whom they can look to as a friend. I am inclined to lay the blame of this principally on the laity. They have put too much on the clergy. It was evidently not the intention of the Founder of our religion that the visiting of the sick and poor, and helping them in times of difficulty, should be thrown mainly on the order of teachers which He appointed.

If any reasonable proportion of the professing church-going Christians in London took such a share of this work, as their circumstances would permit, in how many ways would the community benefit! The poor would have more friends; many clergy and others who are now overtaxing their strength, would be relieved; charity and legislation would both benefit by the greater knowledge that the rich and educated would have of the wants of the poor; and there might probably be a general heightening of the religious tone amongst us, which cannot be expected, whilst so many of us neglect one of our first religious duties,—that “Kindly intercourse with the poor,” which Dr. Arnold joined with prayer, as one of “the two great safeguards of spiritual life—its more than food and raiment.”*

* *Life of Dr. Arnold*, p. 394.

I am quite aware that there are many difficulties in the way of laymen in London, who wish to help the poor personally, but I think that most of them might be overcome, if such work were acknowledged to be a duty. There is some truth in the saying, that the men who are good for anything are too busy to help, whilst the men who have time to spare are not good for anything. But it would be easy to show that much of the most useful philanthropic work in London has been originated and is carried on by very busy professional men, and very useful work of an unpretending kind may be done at a very small sacrifice of time. A man who has only an occasional hour to spare may make and keep up acquaintance with three or four poor families, and his interest in them and influence with them will very likely be in inverse proportion to the small number he visits. There will be nothing formal or official in his intercourse with them, they will soon learn to trust him, he will get to understand and know them well, and perhaps after years of acquaintanceship, kept up as opportunity offers, he will be able to help them at a critical time in a way that none but an old friend could have done.

Much may be done too on Sunday afternoons.

It is on Sundays that the parochial system lays itself most open to the charge of not being a missionary system. Whilst a clergyman is leading the worship of his congregation he cannot be preaching to his half-heathen poor. Paid lay-agents generally have Sunday to themselves. Ladies find it a bad day to visit, because so many men are lounging about the smaller streets. There is no day on which the poor are so much left to themselves, though there is no day on which they are so much at home, or would be more willing to receive visitors, if approached with tact and courtesy. If the incumbent be fully occupied, a missionary curate or some of the laymen of the parish should attend to the wants of their poorer neighbours. Willingness to undertake such work, or to support it, is the best proof that a congregation can give, whether abroad or at home, of their having felt the power of the gospel in their own hearts. It does not necessarily involve teaching in public. Quiet unofficial visiting of such families as are willing to be visited for reading the Bible or religious conversation is in some cases better. Bishop Blomfield was strongly in favour of this practice,* but I am not aware that

* See *Life*, II. 169. The thirteenth Canon mentions

it has been much tried. In some districts members of the congregation have gone round shortly before 11 o'clock service, and have left a printed letter from the clergyman with each poor family, adding a few kind words of invitation. This is said to have had great effect in bringing people to church.

And whilst "want of workers," to quote from a clergyman's description of his district, continues "a chronic and prevalent disease," niches ought to be found even for the "idle men," that is, the men who are not bound to regularity by professional work. For instance, there is much extra duty to be done during sharp frosts and times of special distress. My own opinion is that the less clergymen have to do with temporal relief the better, but at present it often happens that the clergy are necessarily the chief voluntary relieving officers in their parish at such a time. They ought at least to be able to get volunteers out of their congregations to aid them. But, even in parishes where there is little difficulty in getting money under these circumstances, there is often great difficulty in finding hands to dispense it. I have known "visiting of the poor and sick" as one of the employments in which Sunday ought to be spent.

curates and paid lay-agents completely over-tasked in such a parish, and yet the work very insufficiently done. A few "idle men," from that or from some neighbouring congregation might have given most valuable assistance, without pledging themselves for anything beyond the week or fortnight.

I have not enlarged on the various ways in which laymen, and especially good men of business, may assist the clergymen in the more secular parts of his work,—in building and managing schools, and so forth. This obligation is better acknowledged than the duty of personal intercourse with the poor, and is more attended to in practice, though not so much as it should be. In some parishes the incumbent invites his parishioners to form themselves into a Church Association, and to take charge, through committees, of the schools and other charities. In a district in Haggerston, where such an Association has been in existence for some years, it acts through a council; this consists of twelve members, each of whom represents some one agency, such as schools, relief, or church restoration, being generally the honorary secretary of the committee which manages that branch of work. The result is

that the district, though a poor one, supports all necessary parochial machinery, and relieves its own poor without extraneous help. Such an Association no doubt has its drawbacks; difficulties of many kinds may arise; but it must be an important means of promoting that public spirit, which it is so desirable to call out in congregations and parishes. When a clergyman is heartily supported by his congregation, he may hope to do justice to the parochial system. He can then venture to look evils in the face, and to make from time to time a really exhaustive inquiry into the condition and wants of his people, with some prospect of being able to supply those wants so far as they come within his sphere.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE WORKING CLASSES AND SOME OF THEIR WANTS.

IN speaking of the working classes of London we must first note the distinction between skilled and unskilled labour. There is a great difference between the mechanic, the skilled workman—engineer, bricklayer, or carpenter,—who earns his twenty-five to forty-five shillings a-week; and the unskilled workman, of whom the bricklayer's labourer is a type, who earns at most twenty-one shillings.

The skilled workmen live chiefly in the suburbs and in the less crowded parts of the town; when they live in the crowded parts they generally have two rooms at a rent of not less than five shillings. Many of them are in work nearly all the year round; those connected with the building trades are generally out of work for some time in winter, but with their large earnings and the small demands made upon them by

society, it is their own fault if they do not lay by enough to carry them over this time without difficulty. Most of them belong to trade and friendly societies, from which they get help to the amount of ten shillings a-week or more during strikes and in sickness, but not, as a general rule, when out of work for other reasons. There is a strong class feeling amongst them, and the better sort of them are very independent, and look for little help from those above them. Indeed, they do not come much in contact with them. Whole streets of small houses in the east and north of London, and in the new parts of Battersea and Lambeth, are occupied by men of this class. They might have very comfortable homes, but it is the practice of too many of them to take home to their wives the very smallest amount on which they think the house can be carried on, and to spend the rest on drink and other selfish indulgences. This is said to be the case especially amongst those who earn the highest wages. It seems as if their earnings were in advance of their real wants and tastes.

The bricklayer's labourer is a fair specimen of the highest class of unskilled workman. He is frequently an Irishman. If he is a tolerably

steady man, and works for a good master, he probably earns twenty shillings a-week, but he is pretty sure to be out of work for two or three months in winter, and the debts which he incurs then for food and rent are a heavy drag on him during the succeeding summer; whilst very likely he incurs a further loss by pawning and redeeming clothes and furniture. He is to be found in all parts of the town, and seldom has more than one room, for which he pays three to four shillings a-week. If his wife can earn money by milking or washing, or if he have no young children, he may live very comfortably; but if he have several children he finds it difficult to get on, without much more than the average amount of self-control and knowledge of management. But there are many much worse off than he is. The dock-labourer, it is said, does not, on an average, earn ten shillings a-week. Under the head of unskilled labour must be included a large number of irregular workers. Many of them get a living by supplying the middle and mechanic class with vegetables, toys, and other things. Some of them, costermongers, for instance, make a great deal of money at times, and if they are temperate,

saving men, they go on from the barrow to a small shop, but their earnings are uncertain, and the greater number spend them recklessly. "Handy men," that is, men who, for some reason or other, have never learnt a trade, but are willing to "turn their hands to anything," and those who, from physical or moral weakness, cannot hold their own in the struggle of life, form another element in this class, whilst, last of all, come the vicious and degraded.

It is very difficult for a grown-up man to pass from the class of unskilled, into that of skilled workmen; yet in London the demand for the latter generally exceeds the supply, whilst during the greater part of the year unskilled labourers seem too numerous. Trades Unions, with their restrictions on the number of lads that an employer may take, and their rules against any man who has not served a regular apprenticeship doing the work of a skilled workman, no doubt keep down the numbers of the higher class. The want of foresight and enterprise amongst the unskilled tends to the same result; and the isolation and irregular habits of the feebler members of the class, prevent their hearing of or getting even such work as they are competent for. The un-

skilled class cannot be recommended to emigrate ; if they go, they generally fall into the shiftless or vicious class, which is to be found in considerable numbers in the larger towns of Australia, as well as of the United States. This is not the case with those who have been taught a trade, and go out under good auspices. Thousands of the children of the very poor, who have been brought up in Refuges and Industrial schools are now getting on well in the Colonies.

With the skilled and unskilled class alike, indifference to religion is still the rule rather than the exception. Few of them are professed infidels, but the great majority attend no place of worship. Probably the immediate reason of this, with the mechanics at least, is that the public opinion of their class is against attendance rather than in favour of it, and that they are not so far convinced of the importance of religion as to make the effort necessary to resist this. That a considerable number of the working class are willing to respond to any special effort made to induce them to come to church was abundantly shown by the result of the special week-night services held in St. Giles' and other churches at the beginning of 1858 ; but there,

and in many other parishes want of church accommodation went far to prevent any great increase in the number of regular attendants on Sunday.* There is no reason why the mechanic class should not contribute to the expenses of their church, either by seat-rents or by the offertory, but they must first be taught to value the service. They are a difficult class for a clergyman to have much personal intercourse with, as they are from home all day. The City Mission, which deserves credit for the way in which it faces difficulties, is making a determined effort to get at them. Its agents have in many cases obtained permission from large employers to speak to their men whilst at work, or at their dinner; whilst in some cases they have services for them in the early morning. For a gentleman to gain influence with these men as a class, it is necessary to find common subjects of interest with them, such as education, the checking of intemperance, or the progress of co-operative associations, to the importance of all of which the

* "We have absolutely no room for more poor in the parish church on the morning and evening of Sunday."—*Rector of St. Giles' Letter in Report of House of Lords' Committee, 1858, p. 292.*

more intelligent men amongst them are fully alive.

Workmen's Clubs and Halls afford the clergyman an excellent opportunity for making acquaintance with his working men. It is to be hoped that these will become more common. Hitherto it must be confessed that frequent entertainments and extraneous attractions have too often been found necessary to keep such institutions flourishing, but sooner or later they can hardly fail to be valued for their own sake. When a man has but one or two rooms, as kitchen, nursery, sitting-room, and perhaps workshop too, he must sometimes require a place to go to in the evening, and it is equally clear that many ought to prefer a "public-house without the beer," as some already do. The Workman's Club has generally adult classes for singing, arithmetic, writing, and so on, on week days, and a Bible-class on Sundays, in connexion with it. This last is a very important agency, for, though there are many working men who could be got to come to church, if the way were made easy for them, there are many more who look on entering a place of worship as a profession of religion, and who will not go till they

are prepared to make such a profession. Such a man will go with much less hesitation to a Sunday afternoon Bible-class, where he is free to ask questions and express his own opinion; and it is quite reasonable that he should prefer this, for the chief object of church-going is worship, not the learning of elementary principles.*

It is, of course, not easy for the clergy to spare time from their other Sunday duties to take such a class, and it is by no means every one, clergyman or layman, who is competent to do it; but I know hardly anything more likely to be useful. Many men who would be unwilling to undertake a class might, as I have already said, do just the same work on a smaller scale by visiting working men at their own homes on Sunday afternoons. This would, of course, have to be done with judgment. I would only go to such families as I had already made acquaintance with in the week-time; I would make an appointment with them, and would go with the understanding that we were to have a friendly talk about religion.

* More than 500 men, many of them of the lowest class, may be seen any Sunday afternoon at two Bible-classes, conducted by laymen, in a small street near Drury Lane.

I have myself been told by a man, when I was urging him to let his wife read the Bible to him, at any rate on Sundays, as he could not read himself, that he did not care to listen to her reading, she read so badly, but that if I, or any other gentleman, would come and read to him on Sundays, he would be very glad to see us. This man had not been to a place of worship for many years, and it would have been difficult to persuade him to go even to a Bible-class; though he did not at all "hold with" infidels, and had a good opinion of religious people, chiefly on account of the hospitals and other charities that they had established.

In what I have said hitherto I have had the skilled workman chiefly in view, though much of it applies equally to the upper part of the unskilled class. To bring the more irregular members of the latter class to church is necessarily very difficult. Their most common reason for not coming is want of suitable clothes. Could religious principle be instilled into them, this difficulty would in most cases disappear, but in the mean time it excludes them from religious ordinances. The "Mothers' Meeting" is just the agency to help the women over it; a Bible-class to which

none but the poorest should be invited might serve the same purpose for the men.

It must be remembered, too, that some training is required to appreciate our beautiful Church of England Service. Most of the born Londoners of the lowest class have never had this training. How is a man who has never learnt to follow it, and perhaps cannot read, to learn to appreciate it? Some persons answer that our churches and services should be made more pleasing to eye and ear. It is quite right that both should be pleasing within certain limits, but our religion is one of intelligent earnestness, not of sentiment, and it is hazardous to distract people's attention from its great central truths; or to aim at attracting them to church by appeals to secondary motives. They should come to church to worship, and to be encouraged and strengthened in the Christian course. The poor have never been slow to value the substance of religion when it has been fairly put before them, and when a man has learnt this, he will soon learn to appreciate any Scriptural service. Besides personal intercourse and Bible-classes, "cottage lectures," and short school-services are stepping-stones to the full service.

The unskilled workman is much more accessible than the mechanic, and much less independent. Those who wish to help him should take great care that they do not pauperize him. Their motto should be "Help the poor to help themselves." To do this effectually a thorough understanding of the wants of the poor, such as can only be got by friendly intercourse with them, is necessary. Those schemes and institutions are the best which spring from a desire to supply some definite observed want; and, beginning in a small way, gradually extend their operations. It is curious how generally well-meant schemes overshoot their mark at first. The Mechanics' Institute and the Savings' Bank precede the Workman's Club and the Penny Bank; and the Model Building, with its sets of rooms almost too good for the mechanic, prepares the way for the cleansing and repairing of old houses for the bricklayer's labourer. We have now come to understand the wants of the poor pretty well; but much judgment and effort is required to supply them. Religion, as I have implied, is unquestionably their first want; that alone can give them the self-control and the moral standard, which will make it possible for them to meet us

half way; but their other wants re-act on and increase their irreligion. We must attack the evils of their condition on all sides at once. Probably no one cause has so much effect in keeping up the numbers of the sunken, useless class in London, as the state of their houses. I propose to devote a separate chapter to this subject. Then they want better food; even when work and money are abundant, ignorance of cooking and household management on the part of the mother condemns many a poor family to badly and wastefully cooked food; and during the winter there is much actual starvation. "Every spring," says Mr. Gregory, speaking of his own parish in Lambeth, "many die from the exhaustion produced by insufficient food during the previous months." Soup-kitchens, and kitchens where the sick poor and others are supplied with dinners, are one remedy for this. They exist in many parts of London; and very useful they are, especially where some of the children of a neighbouring school take it in turns to assist the cook, and so learn something about cooking. In Manchester there is such a kitchen in connexion with one of the Dispensaries. The advantages of such an arrangement are obvious. All medical men

say that the sick poor need good food, at least as much as medicine; and the mere *advice* to live well is too often worse than useless. Good dinners are given, too, once a week, or so, to the children of many of the Ragged Schools in London, at a penny a head; and the Destitute Children's Dinner Society proposes to extend this system to all parts of the town, if funds can be raised. It is much to be regretted that the cheap Cooking Depôts, which have answered so well in Glasgow, have not taken firmer root with us. In 1865, Mr. Corbett had as many as twenty-two of these, working at a profit, in and about Glasgow. They supply an excellent dinner for $4\frac{1}{2}d.$, and other things in proportion, and have proved most efficient rivals to the whisky-shops. Similar establishments have been tried in London; but not, I fear, with any great success. Such an enterprise requires the good judgment and energy which make the successful merchant; but if these qualities were brought into play, it could not but succeed.

Another want of the poor is nursing at their own homes. Till their houses are improved, the nurse's task must, in many cases, be very hopeless; but she might always do something to im-

prove matters. She would, at any rate, prevent meat being given to a baby in arms, and might, in other respects, enlighten the incredible ignorance of the very poor about common things. Some parishes already count the sick-nurse amongst their agents; and the Sisters and Deaconesses, who are now in charge of many of our Hospitals, in some cases extend their labours to the homes of the poor. Sisterhoods and Deaconesses' Institutions have done something, and may do more to solve the problem of bringing voluntary female agency to bear on the exclusively poor districts of London; and those who like them least will lay aside their prepossessions, in proportion as they see that they are called into existence by a *bonâ fide* desire to obey a distinct command, and supply a crying want, not by sentimental fancies or enthusiasm for a system. Nursing is woman's special work, and there is grievous need of it.

Another common want of the unskilled class is want of work. It is a most difficult want to supply. Much judgment and special opportunities are required for success. No greater benefit can be conferred on a man than to get him regular work; and even employers and employed know so little of each other in London, that oc-

asionally a service may be done to both parties by recommending a steady man. Generally, however, a Visitor must confine himself to finding some temporary employment for those who are in distress during slack times, and to giving advice and assistance in getting children out. Such employment is much the best way of giving relief. Work-Societies effect this to some extent for the women. In many parishes the poorest women are paid to make up clothes, which are afterwards sold at a cheap rate; and in one, at least, this has led to the taking up of Government contracts, which has been pursued with the greatest success.* This is at once a labour-test, and a most economical and uninjurious way of relieving distress. More intercourse between rich and poor would have a tendency to create work. It is strange how, in London, people of the upper and middle classes are often at a loss for a workwoman or a messenger, when there are dozens of poor within a stone's throw, who would be thankful for the job; and of whom some probably are trust-worthy and competent, if they were only known. More communication would

* Rev. R. Gregory, *Organization of a Poor Metropolitan Parish*, p. 39.

be an advantage to both parties. In some cases it may be worth while to form a Register of trustworthy messengers or porters, to be kept at some small shop. Men, whom ill-health or age unfits for regular work, are thankful for such an opportunity of earning a shilling.

But the best help that can be given to the poor is the encouragement of kindly sympathy. No one need shrink from making friends with a few families, because he does not feel qualified to deal with the numerous wants that I have referred to. They will not all arise at once, and there is a sort of moral weakness amongst the poor, which makes the advice and friendly interest of an educated, well-principled man or woman very useful and grateful to them, even when their difficulties cannot be removed. "Few persons," says the writer of a recent most able pamphlet, "are at all aware how much the poor stand in need of information. They neither know that help is to be had, nor how to apply for it; and they often endure life-long suffering for want of some simple surgical appliance, even such as a bandage. They still more often, either from ignorance or fear of expense, neglect their health, until it is past recovery, or else injure it by having recourse

to quacks and their pernicious nostrums. Many might be saved from death, or from lingering disease and dependence upon the public, by the aid of a visitor who would procure for them, at the right moment, skilled medical aid, the services of a nurse, and sometimes only a little tempting or nourishing food.”*

* *How to relieve the Poor of Edinburgh and other great Cities without increasing Pauperism*, p. 25. Edmonston and Douglas, 1867.

CHAPTER IX.

SUGGESTIONS TO LAYMEN.—SOME PERSONAL
EXPERIENCES.

As the chief object of my book is to furnish information about the wants of the poor in London, to persons who are willing to assist in supplying them I propose to devote this chapter to direct suggestions as to some of the modes in which a beginning may be made.

The best general rule, no doubt is, that every man should undertake the work that lies nearest to him, but special needs on the one hand, and special opportunities and capacities on the other, introduce very numerous exceptions to this. Still I would recommend any new-comer to London first to acquaint himself with the parochial machinery of the district in which circumstances may lead him to reside, and to see whether there is not some suitable place for himself in it. The

clergy of the parish will welcome a visitor for such an object, with or without an introduction; indeed, residence in the parish would be a sufficient excuse for calling, so that it would not be necessary for him to commit himself at once by any offer of help. Where the clergyman of the parish prints an annual address, this will supply much of the information required.

Three principal lines of work are pretty sure to be open to a resident in any part of London: 1. Visiting the poor in their homes; 2. Sunday-school teaching; 3. Visiting the infirm wards of workhouses. Any one considering which of these to enter upon, must, of course, be guided partly by his own qualifications, partly by the time at his disposal. It may be worth while to give some further information as to what these kinds of work require: I address myself chiefly to young professional men, who have but a limited amount of time that they can command. It is by such men that much of the best voluntary work in London is done, and it is to such men and their families that London must chiefly look for the agency that is still wanting.

If you have lived in the country you have probably had some acquaintances amongst the

poor of your village, why should you not, in the same way, have some acquaintances amongst your poorer neighbours in London? Want of neighbourly feeling is one of the great evils of large towns, but it is not difficult to find a way to overcome it, if there is the will. It may be said that nearly all philanthropic efforts are attempts to supply this want, and that they are most successful when they most resemble the original neighbourliness, assuming that that is based, as it should be, on religious principle. If you can spare an hour or two in the week-time, say from five to six, on one or two afternoons, why should you not undertake to visit a few poor families? You need not call yourself a district visitor—district visiting is generally in the hands of ladies, and you would probably not find it convenient to attend their monthly meetings, or to tie yourself to their system. But few parishes are sufficiently supplied with lady visitors, and many have nests of dirt or poverty into which only a few ladies are willing to, or can properly, go. In either case, the clergyman will gladly indicate a few families for you to visit, probably without at all fettering your discretion. I would not have you go, at first at any rate,

as a missionary or teacher, rather (to borrow the late Rector of St. Giles' description of a district visitor) as a "family friend." If you are living near, you will probably mention that you are a neighbour, at your first visit, as an excuse for calling; but generally you will find the people accustomed to the notion of being visited, and glad to see you, especially if it is in a very poor neighbourhood, where ladies and gentlemen are not often seen. They will very likely express more surprise at having been so long without any one coming to see them, than at your at last calling on them. This is, perhaps, the most simple and satisfactory kind of usefulness, and it admits of various modifications. A district visitor generally undertakes to collect money from the people in her district for clothing and provident clubs; this involves going round to every contributor once a week during the summer, but this probably you will not undertake to do, unless you are a married man and can get help from your wife. Supposing that you take charge of some houses where there is no such collecting, or where the money is taken to a collector, it should be distinctly understood whether you are responsible for their temporal relief or

not,—if you are, you should try to see every family once in two or three weeks in winter, and occasionally in summer, or you should let them know where they can come to you. It is very desirable that all who help the poor in any given neighbourhood should be in communication, otherwise some get too much and some too little ; so that it should be one of your first objects to find out from what quarters your families get relief. It is best, as a general rule, not to go to the same family oftener than once a fortnight at most, to give relief as sparingly as possible, excepting in cases of recovery from illness, or other special needs, and to visit the families all round in turn (not necessarily in the same order) ; so as not to cause jealousy needlessly, and to prevent its appearing as if the giving of temporal relief was your only business. In visiting very poor people, it requires pains to prevent this taking the chief place both in your own mind and in theirs ; sometimes it is not a bad plan to give what you mean to give at once, and then go on to other subjects. Many families will seldom or never want relief, with them you can sit down and have your friendly talk without awkwardness. If you cannot undertake to visit with some regularity, it

will be better that you should get the clergyman to introduce you to families who already have a district visitor, or whose temporal wants are cared for in some other way. When once you have made friends with them, you can keep up the acquaintance by irregular visits as you have opportunity, and if you go to see them after an absence from London for six months or more, they will appreciate the compliment involved in your not forgetting them. If you visit on Sunday afternoons, I should recommend you to make spiritual work your chief object; I have already spoken of the good that may be done by making acquaintance with non-church-goers, and visiting them at that time, by appointment, for conversation on religious subjects; and if you wish for a humbler kind of work, any clergyman will name a few old or sick people, who will be grateful to you if you will go and read a few verses from the Bible, and part of the Service with them between their dinner and tea.

On whatever footing you visit, I would strongly recommend you—assuming that you are a member of the Church of England—to act in concert with the clergyman of the parish. Of course this is not necessary, and I can quite un-

derstand that some may think that acting with him will give a stiff and formal character to their intercourse with the poor. This need not be so; on the other hand, he is, or ought to be, the person best able to tell you where your labour is most wanted. Where so much work is left undone, it is a great pity that any labour should be wasted. He can put you in communication too, not only with the poor, but with the district visitor, or any other worker whom you may wish to know, and can tell you the different parish arrangements as to services, schools, and so on. The poor are often glad of such information as this; they know wonderfully little sometimes of such things; and they often want to know, too, where to get a letter of recommendation for the dispensary, or for some neighbouring hospital. It is no small pleasure to put some poor fellow who is suffering tortures from a broken tooth into communication with the Dental Hospital, Soho Square, where you know he will get as good assistance as you could get yourself. The "Widows' Gift" is another thing about which the visitor amongst the poor is often asked for advice and help. There is a society (32 Sackville Street) for the relief of distressed widows, the

object of which is to assist widows of good character applying within a month of their husbands' deaths with a sum of 1*l.* to 2*l.*, to enable them to make a fresh start. Every subscriber of a guinea can recommend one case a year; but a poor woman, when she has got the name of a lady who has recommended one person, jumps to the conclusion that she is "*the* lady who gives the 'Widows' Gift,'" and writes to her forthwith: it is well worth an effort to get this "Gift" for a deserving woman.

You will soon find out, too, that one of your people appreciates a book, and another such a periodical as the *British Workman*. Here you will be able to get a child sent to school, there you may persuade a parent to go to church; circumstances vary endlessly, but opportunities of usefulness in proportion to the faith and love of the visitor will be always offering themselves.

2. If you wish for *regular* Sunday work, Sunday-school teaching at once suggests itself. Every parish has its Sunday-school, and these, as well as the dissenting and undenominational Sunday-schools, are almost entirely taught by voluntary teachers. To undertake this, you must

be able to attend regularly. Absence at fixed times, *e. g.* in autumn, may be provided for, but frequent running out of town for the Sunday (a privilege which many professional men value highly), may make you more troublesome than useful. If you can pledge yourself to be tolerably regular, and either have some natural aptitude for teaching, or are willing to take some pains to qualify yourself, there can be no doubt about the usefulness of the work. If you wish to attach yourself to the Sunday-school of your parish, you had better first put yourself in communication with one of the clergy, and get him to introduce you to the superintendent. The school probably meets twice in the day, at 9.30 a.m. and 2 p.m. The superintendent, himself a volunteer, will allot you a class, and will explain the practice of the school as to teaching. It is most desirable to make this as interesting as possible, and as unlike as possible to the routine of the week-day school. After a time you may be asked to take a children's service. Many schools in London have adopted the excellent practice of giving the children a short service of a kind which they can enter into, instead of taking them to church. To take young children straight from school to the ordinary

long service and sermon is too likely to act as a training against church instead of for it. But the result of a Sunday-school depends mainly on the personal influence of the teachers. You should, if possible, make acquaintance with the parents of your children, and should keep up your interest in them after they leave school. How to bridge over the gap between school and manhood is one of the problems of the day. I cannot enter on it here. Something may be done towards solving it by forming advanced classes for the elder lads; some men who shrink from teaching children are willing to take these. If you wish it, a class may probably be got together for you, either at the same time as the school, or at some other hour, perhaps after afternoon service.

3. Workhouse visiting has great advantages for a man who generally spends his Sundays in town, but cannot promise to be absolutely regular, or has little confidence in his power of teaching young people. There are "infirm wards" in every workhouse, most of the inmates of which are unable to go to the chapel or hall service; the chaplain has his double service there, and often has other duties on the Sunday besides, so that it is impossible for him to have any service in

these wards. In most workhouses they are distinct from the sick wards, and are occupied by old persons, or persons suffering from chronic illness. It is one or more of these infirm wards which I propose that you should undertake to visit on Sunday afternoons. Ladies often visit them in the week-time, but rarely on Sundays. If you can go there and exchange a few kindly words with the old men, then read a passage of Scripture with or without comments of your own, and a few prayers from the Liturgy, you will have done something to cheer them, and to mark the day. There will always be some too who will be glad of the loan of an interesting book; and a picture is appreciated by the whole ward. The class of people in the infirm wards is very different in different workhouses. In one in which I used to visit, Irish Roman Catholics predominated, but they always gave me a most hearty welcome; in another which I have visited, an Irish Roman Catholic is rarely to be seen, and a large number of the inmates have been gentlemen's servants. I have made acquaintances worth making in both. In the former, the man who has left the pleasantest impression on my mind was an ex-cabman. He was not an old man, but had been completely

crippled by a bad accident. He was a bullet-headed, determined-looking fellow, and had, I hope, become a decidedly religious man. He was fond of reading, and used to read aloud to the ward; two years before his death a lady kindly taught him to net, and he took up the new occupation with much zest. In the latter my greatest friend was an old bricklayer. When he came into the House he was in severe suffering from inflammation of the eyes, which ended in total blindness. He was at the same time in great anxiety about his soul; but before long he found joy and peace in believing. It is a pleasure now to see his bright, cheerful face, and to hear his hearty voice. He is a simple-minded man, and his only regret is, that he was so late in obeying the call, which he had no doubt often heard, before his illness—in God's providence—brought it home to him. Here, too, a lady gave most timely assistance by sending him a blind teacher, and lending and giving him books printed in Moon's embossed characters. His hard hands made the first lessons more difficult than they would otherwise have been, but he persevered, and has now great enjoyment in reading. I have often found him rejoicing over some fresh book of Scripture

that had been left with him. One of the blind visitors employed by the admirable Society for the Home Teaching of the Blind, calls from time to time to change his books.

Provided that you do not keep a more efficient man away (and there is little fear of that at present, for but few of the male wards have visitors on Sundays), some irregularity in your visits will not much matter; even occasional visits are better than nothing; and, if you can tell the old men whether you are likely to come next Sunday or not, that will save them from unnecessary disappointment at the time. You will easily ascertain what is the most convenient hour for you to go. You must avoid tea-time, which in some Houses is as early as 4 p.m., in others as late as 6 p.m.; in some, too, the friends of inmates are admitted for an hour on Sunday afternoons, and this time is also to be avoided. There is need of some discretion in workhouse-visiting not to give unnecessary offence to the Guardians; any want of prudence tends to increase the prejudice still existing in many Boards against admitting visitors at all. As a general rule, it is not the business of the Sunday visitor to inquire into the diet or other arrangements of the house; but if you should see

anything glaringly wrong, your complaint should be made either to the Master or to the Guardians, through whose courtesy you are admitted.

If you wish to visit any particular workhouse, your best plan will be to write to the Chaplain, and ascertain whether he has a ward to assign you, and whether it will be necessary for you to write to the Board of Guardians. In most cases, if visitors are admitted at all, his introduction of you to the Master will be sufficient. If you wish first to ascertain which of two or three workhouses most needs visitors, you can obtain the information by writing to the Honorary Secretary of the Workhouse Visiting Society, Miss L. Twining, 20 Queen Square, W.C. The Society's Journal, published quarterly by Messrs. Longman for the six years previous to 1865, but now discontinued, gives many valuable hints for all interested in workhouses.

You will easily hear of other parochial and local efforts in which your help will be gladly accepted. There may be a Workman's Club, with its Classes, and Loan and Provident Society, and perhaps with its annual supper, at which honorary members are expected to carve and entertain; or a Youth's Institute, to give boys

opportunities of improving themselves; or a Young Men's Society, with papers on literary and other subjects, for men of a higher class. If you are fond of flowers, your services may be in requisition as a judge at a Window-plant Show in summer, and there is almost sure to be an excursion by van or special train to Bushy Park or Southend for some five hundred of the poorest parishioners, which will give those who have the time to spare an opportunity of seeing and assisting at a scene of very genuine enjoyment. Such things do much to call out that *esprit de corps* in which London parishes are so deficient. If you can give a good deal of time to religious and charitable work, and wish to know where your labour will be best bestowed, or if you wish for some particular kind of work, which is not wanted in your own parish, the Secretaries of the Lay Helpers' Association (see Appendix) will gladly give you information, and will then, if you wish it, put you in communication with any clergyman who has applied to them.

The ragged boys of London have a special claim on young men, and it is by young professional men, amongst whom the well-known author of *The Voyage of the Rob Roy Canoe*

has been conspicuous, that some of the Ragged-schools and most of the Refuges and Shoe-black Societies have been founded and are worked. Busy men find or make time, not only to teach in them on Sundays and watch their working on week-days, but even to keep up some communication by letters and newspapers with the lads who have gone out from them to the colonies or to service.

Amongst non-parochial kinds of work one of the most attractive to many men is visiting for the Society for the Relief of Distress. . It is hard work during the winter, but cold weather calls out one's sympathies, and it is a great pleasure to be the instrument of feeding the hungry. The Committee will gladly accept any person, sufficiently recommended to them, as an Almoner. They will allot him a district, which may or may not be co-extensive with a parish; and which will probably contain from 10,000 to 20,000 people. They will then make him a grant of 20*l.* or 30*l.* to begin with, with the understanding that he is to distribute this in person in the form of orders on tradesmen for bread, groceries, and so on; but considerable discretion is left to him even as to these general rules, and he must be much guided

by the circumstances of his district and the time at his disposal. His first step should be to see his predecessor in the district, or at any rate his report to the Society; if possible he should get the counter-foils of his order-books, or his lists of cases that he has relieved;* then he should put himself in communication with the clergymen and dissenting ministers, or any other person likely to be acquainted with the wants of the poor. They will supply him with lists of names, and will also, if asked, recommend him respectable tradesmen on whom to give his orders. Where a parish is well organized he will have no great difficulty in finding out the cases on which relief will be best bestowed, and if he cannot spare time to give all his orders himself, the District Visitors will be ready to help him. But too often in the most needy districts no such organization exists, and the Almoner must then do the best he can. Some Almoners, I believe, have succeeded in calling a local organization into existence to help them. Information can often be got from the doctor of the nearest

* Letts has published a *District Visitors' Note-book*, which is particularly suitable for persons visiting over a large area.

dispensary, as well as from the parish doctor, and such lay agents as there may be. City Missionaries and Bible-women are to be found in nearly all the poorest parts of London. It should be remembered, however, that it is contrary to the rules of the City Mission, that the former should be made the channels of dispensing temporal relief; their superintendents and the lady superintendents of the Bible-women are better able to give help in actual distribution, and will gladly assist. It must also be remembered, that, whilst the districts of the Society for the Relief of Distress are generally conterminous with parochial districts, though often including more than one, the districts of these undenominational agents are very often quite independent of parish boundaries, so that care is necessary not to allow orders to be given away in the district of a brother Almoner. I should say that it is quite worth while to undertake an Almonership if you can spare two to three hours on about five afternoons in a fortnight during times of actual distress. Much less time will do at other seasons.

Intercourse with the poor in any of these forms has its discouragements, but it should be undertaken as a duty, and then, like most other

duties, it will be found to bring much that is pleasant with it. My own preference is certainly for quiet visiting of a few families. It requires an effort to introduce oneself at first, and even after one has got to know something of the circumstances of those visited, and has felt the pleasure of being some assistance to them, it may still need an effort to go off to the close street in the afternoon or evening; but I have rarely returned from such visits, without having had my heart warmed, and without regretting that I had not more time to devote to such work. I well remember my own first plunge. I had for some time felt that I ought to have acquaintances amongst my poor neighbours in London, as I had always had in the country, but I did not quite know how to begin. At last I went with a young clergyman to see a poor old Irish couple in his district. It was mid-winter, and they were in great distress. This led to my undertaking to visit their house, and seven others adjoining. My friend gave me the names of the families occupying the houses, some thirty-five in all, a larger number than I ought to have undertaken, but I was living near at hand, and had some time to spare.

The place bore a bad name, and I started with exaggerated notions of the amount of rudeness that I was likely to meet with ; but the only man who received me with anything like rudeness was a rough diamond, who soon became my warm friend.

It has been suggested to me that some details about these houses and families will give my readers a clearer idea of the circumstances of the London poor than general statements can. As this book is not likely to find its way into the hands of any of the persons concerned, I venture to comply with the suggestion.

E— Place is a *cul de sac*, consisting of small houses in the poorest quarter of a not very poor parish. It was a well-worked parish, as far as the clergy were concerned, and my eight houses were visited by the Curate and the City Missionary, and sometimes by the Bible-woman and her lady superintendent ; but each of these had hundreds of other families under his or her care, and my families had had no district visitor amongst them for years. I filled much that position, though I did not distribute parish-tickets or money ; indeed I made it a rule to give relief very sparingly. I was welcomed by the

people—by some of them, no doubt, in hopes of getting something from me; by others, I think, from pleasure at seeing a friendly face, and at getting the attention of a visit.

Mr. Gregory's pamphlet admirably describes both the isolation of the London poor and the greater accessibility that is the result of this; "There is a yearning in their hearts for sympathy, for some firm rock or hand on which they may rest, and for the notice of their superiors. More than ordinarily shut out from the former, inasmuch as they have fewer of the gossiping acquaintances so generally contracted in smaller parishes, they welcome with peculiar zest the kindly thought and attention which are bestowed upon them, and which could not be prompted by self-interest."* If this were generally known, surely more of the upper classes would break through their shyness, or whatever else holds them back, and indulge themselves in the "luxury of doing good."

To return to E— Place. My eight houses were built some seventy years ago on a large building estate, but what remained of the leases belonged to five different landlords. They were

* *Organization &c.*, p. 17.

much alike in construction, each containing six rooms, but there was great difference in the character of the occupants—between house and house, as well as between room and room. One house belonged to a landlord who, not long before, had himself been a working-man; he always came round on the Sunday to get in his rent,—a practice which is too prevalent among the owners of small weekly property,—but his tenants all spoke well of him; he was a kind forbearing landlord. He would wait long for payment from tenants whom he knew, and would advance money to enable a widow to get a boy clothed and out. His house was not all one could wish in point of repair, but it was at least as good as any of the others. Another house belonged to a small builder, and was let at seven shillings a-week to an old carpenter, who worked for him, to sublet as he liked. The rent was low, but the carpenter, besides having become tenant some forty years ago, when rents were lower, paid rates and taxes, and did repairs, as well as taking the risk of loss by empty rooms and bad debts. I must say that he and his wife were also very merciful to their tenants, some of whom had been with them a long time. A cobbler and a journeyman shoemaker

were always spoken of as the "landlords," by the other tenants of three of the houses, the leaseholders subletting the houses to them as in the case of the carpenter; in the remaining three I believe the landlords collected their own rents.

I will take the families in the house that I first mentioned, as a specimen of the rest. The two small rooms on the ground-floor were occupied by a plasterer, his wife, and two or three children. He earned about twenty-five shillings a-week when in work, but he used to say that he would gladly take fifteen shillings a-week all the year round in exchange for his uncertain earnings. He was a young man, well disposed, but of no great strength of character; his wife was the daughter of a dock-labourer,—a good-for-nothing man, who had ill-treated his wife and neglected his children. Happily this daughter had been taken into a Refuge, and had been taught what was right, though, like her husband, she wanted resolution to adhere to it; a sister who had been in the same Refuge, had been sent out to Canada, and was doing pretty well there; and a brother, who was sometimes with them, after serving for some time in the Shoe-black Brigade, and distinguishing himself by the largeness of his earn-

ings, is now getting on well in the royal navy. Still they were unsatisfactory people, their rooms were untidy and dirty, and their attendance at the school-service and the mothers' meeting was uncertain. I am thankful to be able to say that a great change has since come over them. They are now living in a different neighbourhood, and are, I believe leading consistently religious lives; I feel bound to add, that the immediate means of bringing about this change was the faith and love of one of a band of young laymen, not members of the Church of England, who have organised a system of visiting in one of the worst parts of London, and have, I believe, taught many what strength spiritual religion gives. The plasterer's father, a drunken old man, who earned an occasional shilling by washing a cab, at one time lived with them, at another in the first-floor back.

In the first-floor front was my friend the rough diamond, a tinker and knife-grinder by profession, very fond of animals and of natural history, no reader, but a man who had been in all parts of England, and had thought much, in an odd wrong-headed sort of way. His wife had been well brought up in a country village, but

at the time I am speaking of, he would neither go to a place of worship himself, nor let her go; since then she has passed through severe discipline from illness, and he is so thankful to have got her back from the edge of the grave that he no longer prevents her going regularly to church, though he has not yet crossed the threshold himself. The wife sometimes made a little money by selling paper ornaments for grates in the streets, and their room had more furniture and more appearance of comfort in it than any other in E— Place. They had no child living with them at that time. When they adopted the child of a country cousin, they moved to a tumble-down cottage in a back yard, the only advantages of which were privacy and independence, chiefly to get her out of what they considered a bad neighbourhood.

In the second-floor back, was an old man who had lost two fingers by an accident at some gas-works. The firm for whom he was then working, who were constructors of gas-works, continued to give him occasional jobs, but during a great part of the year he and his old wife supported themselves by cutting skewers; they took them to Shoreditch, a distance of more than two

miles, and got sixpence a thousand for them, and out of this, twopence had to be deducted for wood! Sometimes he varied his trade by selling sherbet or hot potatoes in the streets.

Lastly, in the second-floor front, was a "handy man" with a wife and three or four children. He had begun to learn violin-making, when a boy, from his grandfather, but his teacher died before the boy had learnt the trade. When I first knew him he was in extreme distress, earning a few pence a-day at most by making toy butchers' shops. He sold them at a penny a-piece, and a very good pennyworth they were, with their walls of thin wood, and joints of painted chalk. He used to sell about a dozen a-night, and more on Saturdays, but he walked many miles to do it; the demand for them, I remember he told me, was falling off, so he was thinking of turning his ingenuity to the manufacture of drinking fountains instead! His neighbour, the tinker, was giving him a cup of tea, when I paid him my first visit. After the roughish greeting to which I before alluded, and some remarks on the way in which district visitors were imposed upon, he said, "Now, sir, if you could get this man work, you *would* be

doing some good." I got him some odd jobs, but tried in vain to get him any permanent employment, so the tinker took the matter in hand himself. He took his neighbour out with him in the streets till he had learnt to tinker and grind, then set him up with an old machine, or "coach," as he called it, and the "handy man" has earned a fair living in the streets ever since.

In the next house was a man who had been a page in a gentleman's family; when first I knew him, he used to go out into the country and collect fresh-water plants and insects for some naturalist; and he used to say that he knew a deal about such things, and that if he had only known how to read and write, he would have got on famously; but afterwards he went into the "paper-flower line," and beautiful bunches of flowers he and his wife make up. When the Princess Alexandra arrived in London, he had a large order,—for a great crown of artificial flowers to be placed on the top of a house in St. Paul's Churchyard. On May-day he and his wife get up a Jack-in-the-green with some of their friends; they make shabby morris-dancers, but I believe they reap a good harvest. They have but one child living out of ten or more. It is sadly

common for poor women to have buried six, eight, or even ten children.

I do not propose to paint the darker side of the picture in so much detail; some of the houses, one in particular, had hardly ever a piece of furniture in them; every room was filled either with helpless Irish or drunken English. In one room was a striving wife, who had seen better days, with an incorrigibly drunken husband; in another a couple, one as bad as the other, with three or four almost naked children. I have known one such woman persuade a lady to come into her room to see what distress she was in; the wretchedness of it was unquestionable, but the lady's attempt to clothe the children only furnished the parents with a little more drink. One of the strongest arguments for systematic intercourse with the poor is, that one thus gets to know the merits of those who do their best to "keep up an appearance," and the demerits of the indolent and vicious. In some of the houses the people were constantly changing; sometimes I made acquaintance with a cabman, and heard how he had to take home from 10s. 6d. to 18s. a-day, according to the time of year, to his master, on peril of losing his place; sometimes with a cross-

ing-sweeper. Families often changed their room and house, but they seldom left the neighbourhood. I used to hear from their neighbours that they had only gone to an adjoining court, and they often came back again to another house in E— Place. I often met with members of the same family living in different rooms; the very poor in London marry very young, and with scarcely any provision for the future. I was once guilty myself of lending a young couple a sovereign to marry on. Before many weeks had passed, the “regular employment,” on the faith of which I had lent the money, failed them, and they were in distress at once, though both were steady and willing to work.

Several of my people had sons or brothers in the army—at Aldershot, or in India; this supplied common ground for conversation.

The cobbler, to whom I have referred as “landlord” of one of the houses, was a connoisseur in sermons; he would not go to the school-service, because, as his wife said, so many went “for what they could get, and people talked so,” and there was no room in the parish church; but in summer he would walk long distances to evening services, generally bending his steps to the south

side of the river, "there seemed more doing there like." He liked the style of the preaching-halls over the water. "There's no respect for clothes there; they're so friendly, too, all coming round you and showing you a seat. T'other evening, when the doors was opened, they sung out to get our comforters on afore we went out, not to get cold. It's not often you hears that." He was much struck by a well-known lay-preacher, whom he heard at one of the theatres. He thought him "a'most too plain. He wouldn't do for a church, but he'll do more good this season than all the churches and chapels together." He was "surprised at the number of working men that came to hear him."

I can no longer visit these families regularly, but I still keep up my acquaintance with those of them in whom I feel most interest, visiting them at long intervals, and occasionally leaving a book with any who I know will appreciate it. In one or two cases, I have kept up my acquaintance with families after they have moved into another neighbourhood. This can only be done occasionally, but sometimes it is well worth an effort to do it.

CHAPTER X.

THE POOR-LAW AND PRIVATE CHARITY.

It may fairly be asked, how it is that we hear and see so much of want, and even destitution, in London, when the law provides that rates shall be raised, for the express purpose of helping the poor, to any amount that may be required. It is, no doubt, partly in consequence of defects in the law, as it applies to London; partly, too, in consequence of faulty administration of it; but I believe it to be principally because no mere legal machinery can effectually do the work which the Poor Law attempts.

From the time of Henry VII. the law has constantly aimed at dividing the poor into two classes,—those who are “sick and impotent, and therefore unable to work,” and those who are “idle and sturdy.” I commend a Statute, passed in Henry VIII.’s reign, to those who admire

short and trenchant Acts of Parliament. It deals with many difficult questions in the space of fourteen lines. "All Governours of Cities and Parishes shall find and keep every aged, poor, and impotent person, which was born or dwelt three years within the same limit, by way of voluntary and charitable alms, . . . so as none of them shall be compelled to go openly in begging." Children between five and fourteen, that "be taken begging, may be put to service." "A valiant Beggar and sturdy Vagabond" was to be whipped, "and if he continue his roguish life, he shall have the upper part of the gristle of his right ear cut off; and if after that he be taken wandering in idleness . . . he shall be executed as a Felon." "No person shall give any money in Alms, but to the common Boxes, upon pain to forfeit Ten Times so much as shall be given."*

Edward VI. founded three "Hospitals" to provide for the poor of the Metropolis, keeping the same distinction in view; "Christ's. and St. Thomas's for the relief of the impotent through infancy and sickness; and Bridewell,

* 27 Hen. VIII., c. 25.

for the punishment and employment of the vigorous and idle.”*

Unfortunately, “the subtlety of nature,” in Lord Bacon’s phrase, does not exactly agree with these sharp-cut distinctions. There are often men who are willing and able to work, but cannot get work to do; and there are others, especially in our large towns, who, without being aged or “impotent,” are hardly fit to do a good day’s work, and get pushed to one side by more active competitors. To find work for the poor, seems to have been a chief object of the Act of the 43rd of Elizabeth, which is the foundation of our modern Poor Law. This Act provided for the appointment of Overseers in every parish; empowered them to levy rates, and directed them to relieve the impotent, and those not able to work, and “to take Order” for setting all such persons to work, as had no means to maintain themselves, and used no trade to get their living.

Till 1834 no great change was made in the system framed under Queen Elizabeth, excepting that, here and there, parishes availed themselves of Acts passed in George III.’s reign, enabling them to enter into union with other parishes,

* Stephen’s Blackstone, iii. 152.

and to appoint Guardians of the poor instead of Overseers. In the scarcity of 1800 and 1801, if not earlier, it became the practice to supplement the wages of those who were at work in proportion to the number of their children: this had the worst results—reducing wages, and discouraging independence and forethought on the part of the labourer. As the population increased, it was found that the smallness of many of the parishes made it difficult for them to maintain their poor economically; whilst the absence of any controlling body rendered it impossible to enforce improved modes of management on unwilling Overseers, or to obtain any approach to uniformity.

The Act of 1834 established a Central Board of Commissioners (now represented by the Poor Law Board) with power to make regulations for the guidance of parochial authorities, to inspect workhouses, and to consolidate parishes into Unions, with a Board of Guardians elected by the rate-payers, and a common workhouse. The chief object of this Act was to establish a system of general application, combining efficiency and economy. To a great extent it has succeeded in this, and has thus helped to bring the country ge-

nerally into a much healthier state. Our *work-houses*, which were intended chiefly for the vigorous and idle class, now contain few able-bodied men or women, and have become little more than hospitals for the sick, and schools for children; whilst the out-door relief is almost confined, in ordinary times, to widows, and sick and aged persons.* This is as it should be; but in two respects (to defer the consideration of some more serious short-comings) the law has not worked well in London. Many parishes have had local Acts, and have not been under the control of the Poor Law Board; and many Unions are so poor that they have not been able to give necessary relief, a great number of the rate-payers being little better off than the applicants for help.

Mr. Gathorne Hardy's recent Act has remedied the former evil, by giving the Poor Law Board control of all parishes, and has taken a step towards remedying the second by throwing the expense of asylums for certain classes of the sick poor, and also that of medicine, salaries of

* Most of those returned by the Poor Law Board as "able-bodied," would be called in ordinary language sick or infirm. All grown-up persons under sixty years of age are returned as "able-bodied."

officers, and schools, on a common Metropolitan Poor Fund.

London consists of twenty-six parishes and fifteen unions of parishes.* It is governed by thirty-nine boards of guardians (some of whom, however, in accordance with their local acts, have hitherto been called 'Directors of the Poor'), and contains forty-one workhouses. Some of these are perfect parishes, containing upwards of 1000 persons, with schools and chapel. Most of the workhouses have separate schools in the country, to which they send the greater number of the children of their indoor poor; and the guardians of the Strand Union are proposing to send their aged and infirm people into the country in a similar way, to make more room for their sick and other cases. In April, 1861, there were 24,450 souls in the metropolitan workhouses and workhouse-schools, and since then the numbers have considerably increased.

We have heard much of late about mismanagement in the metropolitan workhouses, and

* The Poor Law Board has lately directed, under its new powers, that Clerkenwell shall be united to the West (City of) London Union, and St. Martin's in the Fields to the Strand Union. I have not noticed these alterations in my text as they are still incomplete.

unquestionably the medical attendance, nursing, and diet, in nearly all of them, were very bad. Much has been done in the last two years to improve them, thanks chiefly to the inquiry set on foot by the *Lancet* newspaper, and to the Association for the Improvement of Workhouse Infirmaries; it is to be hoped that the Poor-Law Board will now keep all the houses up to a fair standard. In the infirm wards, not only ought sanitary requirements—such as space and cleanliness—to be attended to, but something should be done for comfort and cheerfulness. These wards are the only hospitals for a large proportion of those who suffer from incurable complaints; and as there is little fear of any one shamming either an incurable disease or old age, a distinction might very fairly be drawn between them and the other parts of the house. Inmates of the infirm wards might be allowed (subject to the medical officer's permission) to bring in their easy chair, with other little comforts; and visitors might be admitted more freely, and allowed to bring pictures and books.* Persons are often to be met with

* Visitors to the wards, as distinguished from visitors to individual paupers, are still refused admittance to many of the metropolitan workhouses.

in these wards who have some little property, though not enough to live on, and when once inside the workhouse they get no benefit from this; others have friends, who though they cannot support them, would still gladly bring them any little thing they might want. One merciful provision of the law—that couples of more than sixty years of age “shall not be compelled to live separate from each other in the workhouse” *—is very rarely acted on in London. Still, it must be borne in mind that over-indulgence in the workhouse would be a very great mistake; it would not be right to make even the infirm wards more comfortable than the house of the respectable working man, who has put something by to keep himself in old age, or is supported by his children.

The subject of out-door relief, which is more within the scope of this book, is even larger and more difficult than that of the management of workhouses. Such relief is granted to applicants by the Boards of Guardians, or, in cases of emergency, by their relieving officer, and is given at the workhouse in the form of a weekly allowance of bread or money. There is no appeal from the

* 10 & 11 Vict. c. 109, s. 23.

decision of the guardians. If an able-bodied man apply for relief when out of work, he is met with "the workhouse test," that is to say, he is told that he must prove his destitution by coming into the house. This he will not do if he has the least hope of making a fresh start; for, not to speak of the separation which it would involve between his wife, his children, and himself, he would have to part with any little furniture he might still possess, and to give up his room, which, in the present insufficiency of accommodation, might be a serious loss to him. In times of great distress this rule is somewhat relaxed; indeed the workhouses are often so full then that no more can be taken in; work at stone-breaking is then offered to able-bodied applicants, and bread is given away liberally. But, generally, a man in temporary distress but not sick, if he is to be helped at all, must be helped by private charity. Cases of sickness amongst the very poor are attended by the parish doctor, and he orders medicines and other necessaries for them from the workhouse. Hitherto it has been a common practice for the guardians to arrange that he should supply the medicines at his own expense, and this on such terms as made it impossible for him to give

quinine, cod-liver oil, or other expensive medicines in any quantity : his orders for meat and wine, too, have often been treated with neglect, especially in the poorer parishes. By the recent Act the expense of medicine is thrown on a Common Fund, and it is further provided that the Poor Law Board may cause a dispensary to be established for the out-door poor, wherever they consider that it is required. This is to be governed by a committee of residents paying rates on property assessed at not less than 40% a year. Steps have already been taken to open some such dispensaries, with resident dispensers, and it is much to be wished that a kitchen could be added, or, at least, that arrangements may be made for supplying anything ordered by the doctor in the way of food with attention and punctuality. Ordinary charitable dispensaries generally refuse to admit those who are in receipt of parish relief, and they do not undertake to supply food. At present a destitute sick person must send or go to the relieving officer for an order, then to the doctor at his private residence for advice, then to the relieving officer again for wine or food. In a large parish this is often a heavy tax on time and strength.

Besides the sick, a large number of old men and women, and of widows with families, receive out-door relief. Of course it is for the advantage of the rate-payers to allow an old man 2*s.* or 3*s.* a week rather than to bring him into the workhouse; but, on the other hand, it is the interest of the relieving officer, and of the doctor who attends on the out-door poor, to send all cases of chronic illness into the house; and the very small allowance given to the out-door poor in the poorer districts has a similar tendency. A more liberal treatment of them would keep many out of the workhouse.

In 1865 the average relief given to the out-door poor in the Metropolitan district was only 1*s.* 2½*d.* a-head per week. This is very low; much less than is given in most other places. In Manchester the average was 2*s.* 9*d.*; in York, Leeds, and Newcastle, 1*s.* 8*d.* But the relief varies much in different parts of London. In the City of London Union it averaged 2*s.* 4½*d.*; in Paddington, 1*s.* 11½*d.*; in Marylebone, 1*s.* 11*d.* To go to the other extreme:—in St. George-the-Martyr, Southwark, it averaged 9½*d.*; in St. Giles', 8½*d.*; in Whitechapel, 8*d.*! Now, as Mr. Farnall has well pointed out, if 2*s.* 4*d.* is not too much in

the one case (and the richer Unions have never been accused of extravagance), 8*d.* is far too little in the other, and must often lead either to the House, or to a lingering death from the insufficient supply of the necessaries of life. The average cost of an in-door pauper varies in the same way from about 5*s.* to about 2*s.*, the richer parishes feeding and treating the inmates a great deal better than the poorer. Speaking generally, as the burden on the rate-payers increases, so the expenditure on the poor diminishes : thus the City Union and Paddington, which, as we have seen, gave the most liberal out-relief in 1865, had poor-rates of 8*d.* and 1*s.* 2*d.* in the pound ; while St. George-the-Martyr, Southwark, and Whitechapel, paid 4*s.* 4*d.* and 3*s.* 3*d.* These amounts are for so-called " poor-rate " only ; this includes police and county rates, but does not include " vestry rates,"—for lighting, drainage, &c. The total rates paid by Southwark and Whitechapel were 6*s.* 9*d.* and 5*s.* 6*d.* ; the City and Paddington paid 3*s.* and 2*s.* 7*d.* respectively.* The worst feature, in the present state

* See *London Pauperism*, by Dr. Stallard, p. 267, for a table showing the average out-relief in the different Unions and Parishes, and their respective Rates.

of things, is not this inequality of rating in itself, in defence of which something may be said, but the inequality of treatment of the poor. The poor in Whitechapel and Southwark ought to be treated as well as those in Paddington and the City; but, if they were so, the part of the rates expended on the relief of the poor would at once rise to nearly twice its present amount; and rate-payers, who have great difficulty in paying 3*s.* and 4*s.*, would be called upon to pay 4*s.* 6*d.* and 6*s.* This would bring their total rates up to 7*s.* and 8*s.* 6*d.* on every pound of rent; whilst other independent causes might probably swell them still further.

People are beginning to speak of the equalization of the rates throughout London, as if this would remedy all the evils of the existing system. It certainly would not do this of itself, but it would make it easier to improve the system. It well deserves consideration. The proposal is generally objected to on two grounds; first, that it would be unjust to throw the burden of relieving the poor in the South and East on to the property of the West; secondly, that it would lead to extravagance on the part of Guardians, if it did not make local self-government impossible.

In answer to the first objection it must be admitted, that a sudden shifting of this burden would be unfair, and that it would be most unjust and dangerous to make a change merely on the ground that other shoulders could bear the burden more easily than those on which it rests at present. Still it is worth while to inquire upon whose shoulders the burden ought to rest. Where a large population is drawn together by the opening of mines, or the establishment of manufactories, the persons for whose benefit it is brought together, that is, the employers, ought obviously to give the necessary assistance to the old and disabled amongst their employees. So, in London, the theory is, that the employer, who may be supposed to have works in the district in which his men live, should be the principal contributor to the poor-rates, and should reimburse himself at the expense of his customers; whilst those not engaged in trade, who employ little labour directly, would have to pay on the same principle for their servants and dependents. But the problem is complicated in London by the presence of a large number of persons who are no benefit to any body, and who can hardly be said to have employers, or to be fit to do a good

day's work, though they consume more than their share of the relief given. Such persons must have assistance; and I see no reason why all inhabitants of the town should not be called on to contribute towards it. This would point to some such compromise between local chargeability and a Metropolitan Rate, as was introduced some three years ago with reference to the Casual Poor, and has now been extended by the Metropolitan Poor Act, 1867. But there is a further question, how far our present areas catch the employers of the industrious poor. The docks in St. George's-in-the-East and Poplar may very fairly be charged high rates, for they employ a great many persons residing in those Unions; but many dock-labourers live as far north as Bethnal Green; and there are no docks there to pay for them, and probably few employers of labour of any kind. So, in St. George's, Southwark, the great majority of the inhabitants work for hatters, tailors, and other tradesmen on the north side of the river; who, in many cases, escape the rates of that parish altogether, though in other cases they may have factories and workshops there, as well as retail shops in St. James's. In the City Union two causes have been at work to lower the rates.

1. The value of property has risen very greatly ;
2. The number of poor resident in the Union has absolutely diminished, — the poor having been gradually forced out into the East and West London Unions, St. Luke's, Old Street, and other parishes.* It will hardly be contended that the City employs less labour now than it used to do, or that it should not contribute its full share towards the relief of those sunken masses, which have been festering round it, if not in it, for centuries past.† As means of locomotion increase, it is clear that the areas of local taxation ought to be made larger, for there is less and less probability of the employed living near their master, or even near his works.

In answer to the second objection, that the raising of funds by a metropolitan instead of a parish or union rate, would lead to extravagance on the part of Guardians, it may be said that hitherto Guardians have almost invariably erred on the side of parsimony. If the expenditure of a metropolitan rate were entrusted to the

* The area of the City Union is co-extensive with that of the old walled City ; the East and West London Unions correspond to London without the walls.

† See *sup.* p. 47.

present Boards of Guardians, or to similarly elected bodies, it would still be their interest to be economical, as they and their constituents would have to pay their share of the gross expenditure. The temptation to jobbery would certainly be strong, but jobs might to a great extent be prevented by vigilance on the part of a central authority.

The whole question of the temporal relief of the poor in London urgently demands consideration. Things are in a bad state and are getting worse. Statistics show that pauperism is increasing,* and there is an increasing mass of poverty and wretchedness (in some parts of the town at least) which is only prevented from coming on the rates by having gradually learnt to be content with a mode of life more like that of brute beasts than of men.

Our poor-law system is merely repressive; it aims, as Dr. Arnold said, "at driving the poor into economy by terror." It is an improvement on the system that went before it, but it is quite

* Dr. Stallard says (pp. 33, 40) that pauperism has increased 50 per cent in seven years, and that nearly 400,000 persons now receive relief in the metropolitan district during the twelve months. Of course the numbers at any one time are much less than this.

insufficient by itself. The guardians are volunteers, and so far they deserve credit for their work, but from the nature of their position, and especially from the extent of their duties, they are necessarily guardians of the rates rather than guardians of the poor. No one goes to the metropolitan guardians for advice about any charitable scheme, or looks on them as specially interested in the welfare of individual poor persons. They have good schools for the children who have been actually received into the workhouse, and some pains are taken to get them a good start in life, but they take no charge of the education of the children of those who are receiving out-door relief, and do nothing to put them in the way of earning a livelihood. If we except their schools, they do little or nothing to *prevent* pauperism, or to raise up those who have fallen into it.

Under the present system it is not possible to pay sufficient attention to the peculiarities of different cases. Look at the duties of a relieving officer in a London union. The union contains several thousand poor families, and hundreds of persons come to him during the week to ask for out-door relief,—many on the very morning

of the day on which the Board of Guardians meets. He gives bread or other relief to urgent cases at once; in some unions all out-door cases are left to his discretion, in others all cases come before the Board, but the Guardians are everywhere in great measure guided by his advice in their grants, and sometimes dispose of the applications made to them at the rate of two or three a minute.* He knows very little of the character and antecedents of many of the applicants, and has but a superficial knowledge of their present circumstances, but he knows the character of the different parts of his district well, and has had much experience of the poor. Under these circumstances, however conscientious a man may be, he will necessarily go too much by general rules. He will refuse a deserving applicant, or at most will only allow her two or three loaves a week (which she may have to come some distance to fetch), because she lives in a poor neighbourhood, and he fears that if he did more for her he would be persecuted by her neighbours; whilst he will give money to another, upon whom, as those who had known her longer could tell him, such relief would be thrown away. Of course it is no part of his

* Dr. Stallard's *London Pauperism*, p. 51.

duty to seek out deserving cases, and yet it is not at all uncommon for respectable people to let themselves be driven into a course of borrowing and pawning which must end in parish relief, when a little timely help at the beginning of their distress might have kept them straight. Nor can he be expected to give the case of each applicant much attention or thought, yet the advice and assistance of an experienced man might often be the means of relieving the poor-rates of the burden of a family. In such cases, it will be said, private charity comes in. It ought to do so, and it often does, but its intervention cannot be relied on, till there is more co-operation between it and the Poor Law.

Dr. Arnold thought, in 1839, "that the Poor Law should be accompanied by an organized system of church charity."* An actual combination of voluntary agency with a system like that of our Poor Laws has been found possible in some places, and it is to be observed that both benefit by the alliance. A system of State relief is likely to trust too much to general rules, private charity is equally likely to be impulsive and irregular. Volunteers should, it seems to me, dispense the

* *Life of Dr. Arnold*, p. 468.

relief, whilst the State should furnish a part at least of the funds, and should exercise the right it thus acquires of imposing rules and restrictions on the visitors. But I am not recommending any attempt at such combination in London. The suggestion would, at least, be premature. *Co-operation* between the poor-law authorities and volunteers we may reasonably hope to have soon in some form or other. *The Times* has repeatedly urged the expediency of this, pointing out how well it answered during the cotton famine in Lancashire, and the experience of this last winter (1867-8) in the East of London, has shown how much it is needed here. The discussions that have taken place, and the temporary union of relief societies that has been brought about, may prepare the way for permanent co-operation.

One point to which attention has been called is especially worthy of notice. Mr. Corbett, the Poor-Law Inspector for the Metropolitan District, strongly recommended that charitable societies should not supplement poor-law relief, but that each agency should take entire charge of its own class of cases. This is an excellent principle, but the practice in London has hitherto been directly contrary to it. The out-relief given by the

guardians in the richest parishes is seldom more than enough to pay the recipient's room-rent, and is rarely, if ever, increased in winter, though the cost of living increases. The district visitor or the curate supplements this every now and then by an order for a shilling's worth of groceries; and this again is supplemented by help from the Society for the Relief of Distress, or from some local Society, or possibly from the Police Court. If Mr. Corbett's plan is to be adopted, guardians and visitors alike must take as their standard the minimum of relief on which a person can live, and must give that in each case, subject to deduction on account of anything which the recipient may still be expected to earn, or which he ought to receive from any other source, such as a grown-up son or daughter. One bad result of the present want of system is, that no one feels responsible for the cases he assists; he gives a shilling or two from time to time; it is gratefully received, but so small a sum may be quite out of proportion to the needs of the family; on the other hand, when self-respect has been lost, importunity, and, still more, imposition, may make a very comfortable livelihood by drawing upon different sources.

It would not be difficult to classify cases as between the poor-law and voluntary charity; the former would take the ordinary chronic cases, the latter, perhaps, some of the more deserving chronic cases, but, especially, those temporary cases, which, it might be hoped, judicious help would save from sinking into pauperism. It would be more difficult to apportion out the work amongst our different charitable societies; and yet it is most desirable that temporal relief should come through one hand, or, if this is not possible, that the different persons relieving should at least act in concert.

It may be said that there are three principal classes of Societies engaged in distributing temporal relief in London. First there is a class, of which the Strangers' Friend Society is the most important, in which religious consolation and instruction are brought prominently forward. Similar societies, on a smaller scale, are attached, I believe, to several of the chief Nonconformist chapels. Generally speaking these societies are not "territorial." They make a point of relieving persons at their homes, and of finding out the real merits of cases; but they do not attempt to hunt out all cases of distress in a given area; and

their agents rather pride themselves on being willing to help any deserving person, wherever he or she may live. The Metropolitan Visiting and Relief Association, and the parochial District Visiting Societies, form the second class. These Societies aim at thorough supervision of certain areas; but the clergymen and ladies, who are their principal agents, require to be reinforced in numbers, and to get more help from laymen than they have hitherto received; at any rate, at times and in places in which the work of temporal relief becomes really heavy. A third class is represented by the Society for the Relief of Distress, and some of the so-called "Philanthropic" Societies. This class adopts a secular basis, and deals with physical distress mainly from the business-like and practical point of view.

Much might be said about these different modes of attaining the same object. I must confine myself to two remarks. I believe, on the one hand, that the first two classes, though standing on an explicitly religious basis, generally distribute their relief with fairness, looking to the probability of the recipient making a good use of it, rather than to his creed, or to the chance of proselytizing him. Still, special care will

be necessary to prevent the poor imagining such motives, even where they do not exist. On the other hand, it is a misapprehension to suppose that the secular basis of the third class involves any want of religion in its supporters. Religion comes in as a motive; and though the visitor's business is to relieve physical want, as the surgeon's is to relieve physical pain, "if either the visitor or the surgeon be a Christian, he cannot be precluded from endeavouring to lead all with whom he comes in contact to the knowledge of Him who is the Life."* No man recognised the importance of spiritual religion more fully than Dr. Chalmers; yet he says, in words that should command the consideration of all who respect him, "It has never been enough adverted to that a process for Christianising the people is sure to be tainted and enfeebled, when there is allied with it a process for alighting the people; there lies a *moral impossibility* in the way of accomplishing these two objects by the working of one and the same machinery." For my own part, I believe that "trusting love" of Christ is the

* *How to reclaim the Poor of Edinburgh*, p. 16. I am indebted to this pamphlet for the words from Dr. Chalmers, quoted in the following sentence.

only motive strong enough permanently to supply benevolent societies either with visitors or funds; nevertheless, I have no doubt that, under the present circumstances of London, a secular basis is that from which there is most hope of dealing effectually with temporal evils.

Surely some attempt at permanent combination, or concerted action, amongst volunteers, will be made ere long. Other communities, small and large, are moving in this direction with success—as I hope to show in my next chapter—and our need in London is so evident and so great that we cannot afford to ignore their experience. It is essential that in any such attempt the work of existing agencies should be as little interfered with as possible, and that any new organisation should confine itself to supplementing these, and bringing them into communication. The arrangement and execution of such a scheme will require much thought and practical ability. I leave it to better heads than mine; only adding that if competent leaders can be found, I am confident that followers will be forthcoming.

In the meantime all increase of intercourse between high and low is preparing the way for more methodical charity, by giving some who may

be able to promote it the necessary knowledge of the wants and habits of the poor.

I have before urged residents in London to make friends with six or eight poor families; where several persons do this in the same district, and intend to look after their temporal relief, I would suggest that they should form themselves into small knots, each with its Chairman or superintendent, and should meet occasionally. This will afford each visitor an opportunity of comparing notes with others, and will also give him some one to fall back on in case of absence or illness. Where a neighbourhood is already sufficiently visited by ladies, it will cost a man but little time to undertake the supervision of a much larger number, as sub-almoner of the Society for the Relief of Distress, or visitor for any local society. For this purpose he will not attempt to make acquaintance with the one or two hundred families on his beat, but will only visit those whose cases lady-visitors or subscribers ask him to investigate and relieve. The funds at the disposal of District Visiting Societies are generally insufficient to meet the temporary distress, from want of work and illness, which the first three months of the year always bring with them.

It is just these cases that the almoner will invite them to pass on to him. He will have little or nothing to do, excepting during these months, and not more than than he can attend to on his way home in the late afternoon. He should make it a positive rule never to relieve people till he has seen them in their own houses.

If charitable people generally would only obtain and verify the addresses of street-applicants for relief before assisting them, it would at once put an end to a great deal of fraud. Probably few, who have not made a practice of doing this, are aware how often they are false. Of course, it is not necessary that the person appealed to should himself go to the address. The applicant often takes care to name a place at some distance off. The Society for the Relief of Distress will investigate a case for a subscriber in any part of London. The Notting Hill Philanthropic Society will do the same through its visitors in any part of the Notting Hill Ward; and no doubt local societies will give similar assistance in other parts of London.

Miss Twining's Industrial Home for Girls (22 New Ormond Street) affords an admirable

example of co-operation between the Poor-law and private charity with reference to one class of indoor poor. It is intended for girls of good character who, in the absence of this provision, would be obliged to go into the adult wards of workhouses. They are mostly sent to it from workhouse schools, or after their first place; the Guardians of their parish paying 4*s.* a-week for each, which is considered the equivalent of their keep in the workhouse. They are trained and sent out to service, and they are encouraged to keep up communication with New Ormond Street, and to look to it with a home feeling in later years. The adjoining Home for Infirm and Incurable Women is a no less excellent example of private charity coming forward to supply a perhaps unavoidable defect in the poor-law arrangements. The inmates are respectable women, who can pay 20*l.* a-year towards their keep, or have friends able to pay it for them, but have not means to supply themselves with what is necessary in old age or chronic sickness. The Workhouse Infirmary is generally the only home open to such cases, and there they get no benefit at all from their savings; whilst their antecedents probably make

them keenly alive to its physical and moral discomforts. At 21 New Ormond Street they are enabled to pass the remainder of their lives in comfort. Such well-judged charity is a public benefit of no slight importance.

CHAPTER XI.

POOR-RELIEF IN A GLASGOW PARISH, IN ELBERFELD,
IN PARIS AND NEW YORK, AND AMONGST THE
JEWS OF LONDON.

It will not be out of place here to give a short account of some plans for the relief of the poor, which have been adopted in different places with success. Probably no one of them may be exactly applicable to London, but suggestions may be obtained from all; and in some important respects it will be seen that these successful plans resemble each other, and differ from our system.

The first in order of time is Dr. Chalmers' famous attempt in Glasgow. It was in 1819 that he accepted the charge of St. John's parish, leaving another part of Glasgow for it in order to obtain "a separate and independent management of the poor." Poor relief in Scotland was at that time in a transition state. In some parishes the

means were provided by a rate; in others, by collections at the church-doors. In Glasgow the two systems existed side by side. "All the church-door collections were placed at the disposal of the General Session, a body composed of all the ministers and elders of the city. The fund raised by assessment was placed at the disposal of the Committee of the Town Hospital—an institution which had both in-door and out-door pensioners;"* and was, in fact, a poor-house, though not a work-house.

The Session gave relief in the first place; and then, if necessary, passed the applicant on to the ampler funds of the Town Hospital. There could hardly have been a better arrangement, as Dr. Chalmers pointed out, for lulling the vigilance of those who received the first application for help; yet it is just at the first application that firm and discriminating dealing with cases is all important. Dr. Chalmers shook himself free from both bodies (excepting that his parish was still obliged to pay rates), and undertook the complete charge of his own poor. St. John's parish was one of the poorest in the city, and contained a population of 10,000. The cost of the pauperism,

* *Life of Dr. Chalmers*, ii. 212.

when he entered on his charge, was 1400*l.* a-year. He divided the parish into twenty-five districts, and committed each to the care of a deacon.* Every application for relief was strictly investigated. "By patient inquiries imposture was detected; and the deserving and the undeserving poor were carefully distinguished from each other. By kindly counsel and temporary aid, habits of industry and the spirit of self-reliance were fostered. By diligent application at all the natural and ordinary sources of relief, relations and friends and neighbours were stimulated to the fulfilment of obligations binding in themselves, and most beneficial to society in their discharge, and all this was done by men who held a far different kind of intercourse with the poor from that of the cold official, who, ignorant of everything but the application made, presents himself in no other than the repulsive attitude of rejecting it if he can, or reducing the allowance to its lowest limits. The St. John's deaconry—employed as it was to promote the education as well

* Dr. Chalmers' voluntary lay-agency consisted of elders concerned chiefly with the spiritual welfare of the people of his parish, and deacons who attended to their temporal wants.

as to manage the indigence of the parish—mingling, as it did, familiarly with all the families, and proving itself, by word and deed, the true but enlightened friend of all, did far more to *prevent* pauperism than to provide for it.”*

The result was, that in four years' time the expenditure on the poor was reduced from 1400*l.* to 280*l.* a-year; and, in 1829, more than five years after Dr. Chalmers had left the parish, it was still only 384*l.* In 1833 an English Poor Law Commissioner, Mr. E. C. Tufnell, reported that “facts seemed all in favour” of the St. John's system of management, though the lovers of the old system still opposed it keenly. “The essence of the St. John's management,” he added, “consists in the superior system of inspection which it establishes; this is brought about by causing the applicants for aid to address themselves, in the first instance, to persons of station and character, whose sole parochial duty consists in examining into their condition, and who are always ready to pay a kind attention to their complaints. This personal attention of the rich to the poor seems to be one of the most efficient modes of preventing pauperism. It is

* *Id.* p. 306.

a subject of perpetual complaint, that the poor do not receive the charities of the rich with gratitude. The reason of this appears to be, that the donation of a few shillings from a rich man to a poor man is no subtraction from the giver's comforts, and consequently is no proof of his interest in the other's welfare. If the rich give their time to the poor, they part with a commodity which the poor see is valuable to the givers, and consequently esteem the attention the more, as it implies an interest in their prosperity; and a feeling seems to be engendered in their minds of unwillingness to press on the kindness of those who thus prove themselves ready to sympathize with them in distress, and to do their utmost to relieve it. This feeling acts as a spur to the exertions of the poor; their efforts to depend on their own resources are greater, and consequently the chance of their becoming dependent on the bounty of others less."*

After eighteen years of success, during which the expenditure on the pauperism of the parish averaged only 30*l.* for every 1000 of the population, the enterprise was given up. Hence it is often supposed to have failed. As an experiment

* *Id.* p. 313.

it succeeded. It was given up not on account of any defect in itself, but because of the difficulty of managing a single town parish on a system different from that of the rest of the town without even the countenance of the central authority. It has been said, on the other hand, that the success of the attempt depended on Dr. Chalmers' power of raising funds, and on his influence in calling out and directing his agents. To lay stress on the former point would imply a misconception. The whole success of the scheme lay in the fact of very small sums being required. Thirteen years after the enterprise in St. John's parish had been given up, Glasgow, according to Dr. Chalmers' biographer, instead of 30*l.*, was spending 250*l.* a-year in relief for every 1000 of her population; nearly as much, that is, as we are now spending in London. As to Dr. Chalmers' influence over his agents, it is to be observed that the system worked for fourteen years after Dr. Chalmers had left the parish. It is certainly important that in every such attempt visitors should have some judicious adviser to direct and check them. Dr. Chalmers was admirably qualified to do this; but the judgment and experience of the poor, which are the most necessary qualifications

for such a superintendent, ought not to be very difficult to find.

The most important points of the system appear to me to have been the employment of unpaid visitors with sufficient checks, the close investigation of cases, and especially of new cases, by these visitors, and the pains taken by them to call out self-reliance and neighbourly help. Dr. Chalmers loved to keep "the obtrusive hand of public charity" in the back-ground. But it is the spirit rather than the form of his method that we can hope to copy. I should add that the deacons reported that the time spent by each of them on the pauperism of the parish, "did not, on an average, exceed three hours a month." The statement is surprising, but it must be understood of a time when they had got their districts well in hand, and knew their people.

A very complete system, in some respects resembling the Glasgow attempt, has now been in operation for sixteen years in Elberfeld, a manufacturing town in Prussia, not far from Düsseldorf. There is apparently no national system of poor relief in Prussia. Various systems were tried in Elberfeld,—church systems and municipal systems,—and in 1817 an organization

was framed much like that of our own poor-laws. This continued till 1853, but with no good result. Pauperism increased, and the poor-rate became enormous. These circumstances forced the town to try a new system. Under this the town continues to provide the funds, but they are distributed by unpaid visitors. It was described, as follows, in the first number of *Good Words*: "The town, with a population of 53,000, is divided into 252 districts, one to about 210 people. A visitor is appointed over each district. The visitors offer themselves for three years; but, though they can then retire, by far the greater number have preferred remaining, and only those have withdrawn who were unable to continue. They are of all grades in society, in office and out of office, headmasters of the 'gymnasiums' and elementary teachers, great merchants and small, persons of property and young men in warehouses, manufacturers and journeymen weavers, artizans and bankers. They may be of any denomination; an important matter in Elberfeld, which can boast almost every sect. They are only asked if they will faithfully discharge their duties. These are to visit fortnightly each of the poor in the district

in their houses ;* . . . to inquire into their circumstances, to foster self-reliance, to counsel and rebuke them, to reconstruct the ruined family life, to preserve and develop family and neighbourly relations, by every means to prevent dependence on charity, where help is imperative to give no more than is absolutely necessary, where work is wanted, to provide it, to detect imposition, and reclaim the outcast.

“The districts are organised into eighteen circuits. Every fortnight the visitors of each circuit meet under the presidency of a superintendent. At this meeting they report upon the poor, and prefer their requests for help. In doubtful cases a majority of votes determines, and in no case can relief be granted for longer than fourteen days; if still necessary, the application must be renewed. The superintendent must visit the poor of the district quarterly, as well as accompany the visitor in any circumstances of

* *The Instructions to the Superintendents and Visitors* provide that the visitor shall not, as a rule, have charge of more than four families who are in receipt of relief. The superintendents are directed to adjust the districts from time to time with a view to this. But this rule is departed from in times of exceptional distress, or in case of a special understanding between visitor and superintendent.

peculiar emergency. They appear also at the sittings of the Poor-Law Board, which are held on alternate Wednesdays with the circuit meetings, report there upon the condition of their pauperism, and receive the needful supplies in money and kind for the circuit meeting following; they are, in fact, the organs of the board. This board is composed of men of high standing, who, like the rest, voluntarily offered their services. Its position is that of a committee of the Common Council. It fixes the assessment for the year, manages the outlay, superintends both the indoor and out-door relief, investigates the condition and causes of the pauperism, and reconsiders, or, if necessary, changes the decisions of the circuit meetings. Its president is the Mayor, if we may so translate the Ober-Bürgermeister.

“It was in 1851 that the plan, then well considered, was laid before the Corporation. It was received with a storm of opposition, and not without ridicule. A well-meant, impracticable theory! Who would volunteer to work like that? If one or two were ready, who would dream of 252? It was strangely Utopian, the council might pass on to business. Reduce the visitors, suggested one member at length; reduce the

visitors, and it may have a chance. Reduce the visitors, was the reply, and it is at an end. Perseverance won some little concessions: permission was given for an experiment; it was allowed on sufferance; of course, it was said, the men will never be found. Nearly 300 offered. Then sage people shook their heads, and said it would not last a month! The poor regarded it with suspicion. It went on without pause or hitch; with what result can be very briefly stated. In 1852 the town was in embarrassment, pauperism was advancing with the hugest strides, the poor-rates were enormous, the income fell far below the expenditure, the number of poor was upwards of 4000, or one in twelve. In 1857 the town breathed freely, the poor-rates were trifling, the reduced assessment much more than covered the need, street-begging had disappeared, there were no cases of neglect, the genuine poor received large help, and the number of poor had fallen to 1400, or one in thirty-eight, and was still falling.”* To continue the account of results; in the first fortnight of 1858 there were 675 persons in receipt of relief; in the first fortnight of 1863 there were 565, although the popu-

* *Good Words*, i. 5.

lation had been increasing at the rate of nearly 1000 a-year. "And with the decrease of poverty there is a decrease of crime. There can be no surer index that the poor-relief is healthy and real. It proves that it is the poverty itself that is fought against and overcome, that men are relieved from the most fertile temptation to crime."*

Such a system is worthy of Christianity. Elberfeld has long been a centre of missionary effort. It will be known to some as the town of the elder Krummacher and of Hermann Peltzer. It has given one more proof that the spirit which sends out missionaries to the heathen is the same which works hardest for the poor and suffering at home. Wherever Christianity has real power, such an effort as that made at Elberfeld ought to be possible; and, on the other hand, it may safely be asserted that, without some such personal effort, the poor of our large towns can never be brought into a satisfactory condition. The essential points of the Elberfeld

* Appendix to *How can we best relieve our deserving poor?* by Dr. Norman Macleod, p. 40. I have also referred to Ober Bürgermeister Lisohke's paper read before the Kirchentag at Hamburg, in 1858, and published at Berlin, and the *Instructions to the Superintendents and Visitors*, printed at Elberfeld, 1861.

system are represented to be (1) the unpaid visitors, (2) the control under which they act, (3) the districts of manageable size.

Elberfeld is a very small place in comparison with London. It is interesting, therefore, to find that some of the same principles of poor-relief are found to be applicable in Paris. In France there are no poor-rates and no work-houses, in the strict sense of the word, (places, that is, in which the idle poor can be set to task-work), yet the poor are better cared for there than in England. An important and excellent result of the absence of poor-rates is that the poor have no *legal right* of maintenance.* They are in no danger of being neglected however, as there is a well-organised system of charity in existence throughout the empire. There is a *bureau de bienfaisance* in every parish in the country, and in certain subdivisions of towns. It is composed of the chief officials in the place, and other residents, and some *sœurs de la charité* are always attached to it. These bureaux are under the control of a

* My remarks on the French system are chiefly derived from a pamphlet by Mr. Milne Home, entitled *Social Reforms needed in Scotland*. Blackwood, 1867. I have also referred to Mr. Blanchard Jerrold's *Children of Lutetia*.

minister of state, and the funds which they dispense are derived from endowments, grants of public money, a special tax on opera and concert tickets, subscriptions, and other sources. The labours of the members are recognised as public services, and render them eligible for the Legion of Honour. The Sisters of Charity have retiring pensions provided.

In Paris (which had in 1858 a population of about 1,650,000) there is such a bureau for each of the twenty arrondissements. The members take charge of the administration of out-door relief. There are also Hospitals (*hôpitaux*) for the sick, and Asylums (*hospices*) for the incurably diseased, the aged, and orphans; but the number of those admitted to the last is kept down as much as possible. Old people are encouraged to remain with their relations; and, if they enter a hospice, "inducements are held out to them to pay a small sum monthly for their board and lodging." The bureaux act mainly through volunteers. "In Paris, whilst there are about 1000 clerks, who keep the books and the stores, and collect funds, &c., there are nearly 3000 unpaid almoners (*commissaires* and *sœurs de la charité*) who visit the poor, and take to them

the necessary relief." This much reduces the management expenses, and a still more important reduction of expense is effected by the pains these visitors take to prevent the poor from falling into permanent destitution. Their judgment and influence are the check to which the French system appears to trust in the place of our rough and ready workhouse test. We are making a slight approach to the French system in the Asylums (corresponding to their Hospitals) that are shortly to be built for certain classes of our sick poor. It is much to be wished that we could also take a hint from them, with reference to the administration of out-door relief. I am persuaded that, as a system, it is both more effectual and more economical than our own. I do not mean that the adoption of it would at once diminish our expenditure, but I believe that it would enable us, at a not very greatly increased cost, to do that well which we attempt at present in a most slovenly manner, and it might avert difficulties which are certainly impending. It would be well worth while, with such an object in view, that the metropolitan rate-payers should be assisted to bear any necessary increase of expense by a Parliamentary grant or by subscriptions.

New York may suggest a way in which steps can be gradually taken in the right direction. It is to be observed that the French system corresponds at once to our poor-law system and to our charities. In New York, which in many respects resembles London, an attempt has been made to supply the defects alike of Poor-law and of Charities by means of a large voluntary organization. The city contains about a million of inhabitants: its sanitary condition is bad, and its pauperism large. It has a Poor-law not unlike our own, and numerous charitable societies. In 1843 a number of gentlemen appointed a committee to "inquire into the causes of failure in the several charities." They reported that among those causes were—(1) "The want of discrimination in giving relief;" (2) "The independent action of the several societies;" (3) "The want of all provision for personal intercourse with the recipients of alms at their dwellings, and for such sympathy and counsel as would tend to encourage industrious and virtuous habits, and to provide for the *permanent* physical and moral improvement of those relieved; and, finally, as regarded the State Poor-law, that every form of public charity, which had not especial reference to the

removal of the causes of poverty, must increase its amount; and, when it has done its utmost, must leave an immense work unaccomplished, which cannot be effected by isolated individual exertions.”* This led to the establishment, in 1844, of the New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor. It has divided the whole city into twenty-two districts. “ Each district is superintended by a committee of five. One of these acts as Chairman. Each district is again divided by this committee into sections, the number of sections being determined by the number of visitors required by each, about twenty-five families being apportioned to each visitor. The whole association is governed by managers; including president, vice-presidents, treasurers, and secretary, about nine in all, who, along with the Chairman of each district, form a supervisory council. There is a central office, with a paid secretary. The visitors, all gentlemen, number about 370. The board of managers have exclusive control of the funds, fill up vacancies in their body, appoint the district committees, and adopt such means as the objects of the insti-

* *How can we best relieve our deserving poor?* by Dr. Norman Macleod, p. 17.

tution require. They meet for the prosecution of business once a month, except in July and August." The Association interferes with no existing agencies, voluntary or legal; but its visitors do their best to aid all such, and themselves only assist such cases as are not sufficiently provided for. They give relief only after personal inquiry; they insist on the children of those whom they help being sent to school, and they are careful to encourage self-respect and forethought, and not to do too much even for the deserving. Subscribers refer all applicants for charity to the visitor of the section in which the applicants reside.

London is suffering from the same evils as New York, might it not be worth while to inquire in a similar way for a remedy? Our Society for the Relief of Distress already resembles the New York Association in some respects, but the Association differs from it in its more distinct setting forth of the objects to be aimed at, and in its stronger and better supported organization. If the Society for the Relief of Distress had an experienced council to advise and assist the Almoners, and if it had 1000 Almoners instead of 100, it might open a campaign against London

poverty with some prospect of substantial and enduring success. It is probably true that the charities of London—hospitals, relief societies, asylums, and the rest—relieve as many poor as the poor-rates; if they only worked on a combined system, the same money and labour might probably do all that is required; for all experience agrees that it is surprising how much good a little money will do, when it is judiciously dispensed by kindly hands.

It is essential for any such attempt at systematic charity, that there should be some few persons of practical ability to take the lead; it is hardly less important that the visitors should not be overburdened with work. I remember seeing a pamphlet on parochial machinery by a clergyman, in which incumbents were recommended, if they had only a small number of district visitors, not to spread them over their whole parish, but to give each of them a small manageable district, and to leave the rest of the parish without any pretence of visitors till more could be found. A similar course should be pursued in appointing unpaid administrators of poor relief. The first step should be to decide on the number of families which one visitor could con-

veniently take charge of; this should be the standard by which the rest of the arrangements should be measured. Where unpaid visitors really could not be got, paid visitors might be appointed. Our Jewish fellow-townsmen make use of such, and this is only one point out of many in which we might take a hint from their practice.

Ten years ago the Jews in London were in an analogous position to that in which we still are. The removal of the richer Jews to the west of London had put a stop to neighbourly charity, and though they had many charitable societies at work, it was found that neither they nor the synagogues relieved the poor satisfactorily. "Pauperism rapidly increased, because the system neither provided for investigation into the merits of the various cases, nor for their relief with the necessary efficiency and dispatch. . . . Under these circumstances it was resolved in 1859, by the consent of the synagogues, to form a central board of guardians to raise funds and relieve the poor. . . . The Board consists of twenty-nine members, of whom nineteen are delegated by the three conjoint synagogues, and the rest are elected by the subscribers to the funds

dispensed.”* The Board entrusts most of its duties to committees; thus, there is a relief-committee of three members which sits on Monday and Thursday evenings to receive applications. It is assisted by two paid investigating officers, and full records are kept of the circumstances of every applicant for relief, whether he is helped or refused. When the distress is genuine, the first object of the relief committee is to ascertain the cause, and, if possible, remove it. They urge the poor to come to them “before they are completely pauperised,” and they are well aware that in many cases liberal relief at first is good economy. They do their best to improve the physical and moral condition of applicants. The use of a bath-ticket is often made a condition of relief.† They pay special attention to the feeding, education, and apprenticing of the children of those who receive relief. Sickness is liberally cared for by a medical committee, which, besides employing two medical men, is in communication with various hospitals, and with a kitchen for the sick in Artillery Lane, Spitalfields, established by the

* *London Pauperism amongst Jews and Christians*, by Dr. Stallard, p. 24.

† *Id.* p. 50.

Baroness de Rothschild. In some cases the Board has taken general measures of prevention. Thus in 1865, when fever was prevalent, they made a systematic sanitary inspection of the houses of the Jewish poor, and obtained numerous improvements in their condition by representations to the landlords, and to the Local Board of Works. On the approach of cholera in 1866, still more was done; "twenty-seven stand-pipes; affording a constant supply of pure water, were erected, at the expense of the Board, in the most densely populated quarters where the Jews reside." A system of house-to-house visitation was established, and, where the houses were found to be filthy and unfit for human habitation, the families were removed to other houses taken for the purpose, whilst their own were cleansed and whitewashed.* In dealing with the able-bodied poor the Board often have recourse to loans; they have lost very little by bad debts, but the practice evidently requires great discrimination and firmness.† It was at one time recommended to Guardians by our own Poor Law Board, but was not found to work well in their hands.

The Jewish guardians aim at prevention of

* *Id.* p. 68.

† *Id.* p. 155.

pauperism rather than at mere economy of relief. Our own guardians hardly attempt the former. The two great causes of pauperism in London are the state of the dwellings of the poor and drunkenness. No attempt is made to treat either of these as a rate-payers' question. I do not say that it is the duty of the boards of guardians, as at present constituted, to take up such subjects, but they urgently require attention; and if they are not within the scope of the poor-law system, that is a sufficient proof that it needs supplementing. In the interest of the rate-payer, as well as of the poor man, it is most important that we should not be content to confine ourselves any longer to treating the symptoms, without reference to the disease. At present the metropolitan guardians simply despair of being able to make any permanent impression on the mass of poverty with which they have to deal. The task before them is a very difficult one, and they approach it under special disadvantages. Most of them are men who have given little thought to social questions, and can spare little time from their business to attend to the details of relief. Men of leisure, and especially men who have had any administrative experience, can find no more useful or truly

charitable work than that afforded by the office of guardian. In the richer parishes a man of position and ability will not generally find it difficult to get himself elected, and, in such parishes as have not one-third as many *ex-officio* guardians as they have *elected* guardians, the Poor Law Board has now power to make up the third by nominating residents with certain qualifications. It is said that their difficulty is to get men, whom they think suitable, to consent to act. The committees of the new asylums and dispensaries will offer a similar, though less extensive, field of usefulness for those who have, or can make, time for an important social duty.

CHAPTER XII.

SANITARY LEGISLATION.

THERE must be some sanitary regulations wherever a large number of persons are living together, whether in a town or a camp; but the greater part of London has had wonderfully few such, until within the last twenty-five years. This was the result partly of very general ignorance as to what the health of the community required, partly of the strange absence of local government, in which all London outside the City was allowed to grow up.

The City,—as the editor of the curious volume of City Records, known as the *Liber Albus*, has shown,—suffered in the Middle Ages from a superfluity, rather than a deficiency of laws, and its sanitary enactments are still in some respects more stringent and effectual than those of the gigantic after-growth to which we have no more distinctive name to give than “the metropolis.”

Fitz-Alwyne's *Assize*, "the earliest English Building Act," with its requisitions as to the partition-walls of houses being of stone, and as to various other precautions against fire, dates from 1189, the first year of the mayoralty of Henry Fitz-Alwyne, first mayor of London, and applied only to what was under his jurisdiction; and it was to the City only that numerous petty provisions as to the sale of food and drink applied, and various regulations about water-supply and cleansing and paving the streets. "In the days of Edward I. persons living in the City were at liberty to keep swine *within their houses*," but the swine of the hospital of St. Anthony (the patron saint of swine) were the only pigs allowed to run 'loose, and were known by a bell round their necks; there was a similar exception for *chiens gentils*; "in other words, dogs that belonged to 'the great lords of the land.'"* We hear, too, from

* Introduction to Mr. Riley's *Liber Albus*, pp. xxix. xlii. Compare with these last bye-laws a quotation given in Knight's *London*, ii. 349. "1760, Dec. 31. A great many hogs were lately seized by the churchwardens, overseers, and constables of the Parish of St. George, Hanover Square, and sold for the benefit of the poor, agreeable to the 8th & 9th of Will. III., which makes all hogs forfeited that are bred, fed, or kept in the houses or backsides of the paved streets," &c.

time to time, of precepts from the Lord Mayor for the removal of ashes and dirt. But in the suburb there was no central authority, and Government seldom interfered with it, excepting by the unavailing attempts to check its growth, of which I have already spoken. We can hardly wonder at this wish, when we see how terribly frequent fires, famines, and pestilences were, though we may regret that it did not take the more serviceable form of providing for the government and wants of the intruders.

We now think a system of underground drainage essential to the health of a town, but it is said that an act passed in 1531, appointing commissioners to survey ditches, gutters, and sewers, was the first attempt of any importance to supply the want of this. Boards of commissioners of sewers, appointed under this and similar acts, long remained the chief sanitary authorities in metropolis and city alike. In 1848 an act was passed to unite the various metropolitan boards, but, on the creation of the Metropolitan Board of Works in 1855, the united board was abolished. The Court of Sewers is still the chief sanitary authority in the City.

The first considerable impulse to sanitary

researches seems to have been given by the appearance of the cholera in this country in 1831.* In 1837 an unusual prevalence of fever in Spitalfields, and fear of a return of the cholera, led the Poor Law Commissioners to send Dr. Southwood Smith and others to inquire as to the removable causes of disease. Bad drainage and bad ventilation were stated in their report to be the chief of these; and it was shown that out of 77,000 persons, who had received out-door relief that year, nearly a fifth had been attacked by fever. The first report of the Registrar-General, which appeared in 1839, supplied much valuable information to sanitary reformers, and called attention again to the high, but probably reducible, mortality in towns.† From 1837 to 1845 inquiry succeeded inquiry. The Poor Law Commissioners, a Committee of the House of Commons, the Health of Towns' Commission, and the Metropolitan Sanitary Commission, successively published the result of their investiga-

* *Quart. Rev.* cxviii. 255. This article gives an admirable sketch of recent sanitary legislation, down to 1865. I have, in great measure, followed its guidance in the next few pages.

† *Id.* lxvi. 123.

tions. The elaborate Metropolitan Building Act of 1844, no doubt, owed some of its provisions to these inquiries; its preamble refers to imperfect drainage, and want of ventilation from the narrowness of streets, as two of the evils which it was desirable to remedy; or, at any rate, to guard against in additions to the existing town. It imposed restrictions, too, on the use of cellars as dwellings. They were placed by it under the supervision of the District Surveyor, and still remain under his charge; though now that there are officers of health and inspectors of nuisances expressly appointed for sanitary duties, it would be well that the responsibility of closing all such underground dwellings as do not satisfy the provisions of the law should be put on them.

With 1846 legislation began in earnest. Up to that time, if a man chose to poison his neighbour by keeping offensive accumulations in his yard, redress could only be obtained in one of the higher courts, after great expenditure of time and money. In that year was passed the first of a series of "Nuisances Removal Acts," and power was thereby given to certain public officers, after obtaining a magistrate's order, to put down nuisances injurious to health. These acts apply to the

whole country, and deal with various matters which are hardly included in the name commonly given to them; thus, the "local authority" (that is in London the parish vestry or district board of works) is empowered by the Nuisances Removal Act of 1855 to take proceedings where a house is "so overcrowded as to be dangerous or prejudicial to health," and magistrates are enabled to make an order thereupon, and to fine the person permitting such overcrowding.* This power has been of great use in some metropolitan districts, though in others the unwillingness of the medical officer of health to take the first step, or of the magistrate to convict, arising from their knowledge of the difficulty which the poor have in finding accommodation, has prevented its being acted on. In 1846-7 acts were passed enabling parishes to build baths and washhouses for the encouragement of cleanliness among the poor. In 1848 the Public Health Act was passed; the metropolis is excepted from its operation, but has indirectly benefited by the labours of the General Board of

* This provision was limited to houses occupied by more than one family, but by the Sanitary Act, 1866, s. 19, that restriction is removed, and the provision is extended to "any house or part of a house," so overcrowded as to be dangerous to the health of the inmates.

Health, which it appointed; and it has since been expressly included in the power of inquiry possessed by the Privy Council as successor to the Board; this may be of much use at times in stirring up the dormant energies of its authorities.

In 1849 a second great visitation of cholera, which carried off upwards of 4000 of the inhabitants of London in five weeks, gave a fresh proof of the need of sanitary improvements. In 1851 Lord Shaftesbury carried his Common Lodging House Act. No Act has ever gone more directly to the root of the evil at which it was aimed. The Common Lodging Houses, or "Kitchens," of St. Giles' and of other parts of London, had long been notorious as the haunts of the most irregular and degraded class, and as hot-beds of crime and disease. Lodgers paid from 6*d.* down to 2*d.* a night for a bed, or part of a bed, and the use of a kitchen and kitchen fire. The keepers rapidly grew rich; many men have made fortunes at the trade; but their houses were generally dirty and out of repair: their customers had little wish for cleanliness or sweetness, and did not treat things in a way that would encourage a landlord to repair or im-

prove. The Act of 1851, amended by a similar Act in 1853, provided that all such houses should be approved and registered by "the local authority," which in the metropolis is defined to be the Commissioners of police. The number of lodgers that may sleep in each room is to be fixed when the house is registered. The walls and ceilings are to be lime-whitened every year in April and October, and power is given to make and enforce further regulations. These powers were, probably, intrusted to the police, because there was then no other central authority in the "metropolis," nor any sufficiently strong local authorities; but there can be little doubt that the success of the Act in London is mainly due to this. There is a separate department at Scotland Yard for the execution of these Acts, and of certain duties imposed on the police with regard to dangerous structures. In 1859, 2646 lodging-houses were reported as registered. The provision as to the number of lodgers to be received is no doubt much evaded. The motive to evade it is strong in the present over-crowded state of London, and it is difficult for the police to enforce it. But the other provisions are well carried out. If you go into a

court of very poor houses, and find a Common Lodging House amongst them, it is sure to be far above the others in cleanliness and airiness. These Acts have been some slight check, too, on the very general practice of taking lodgers into private rooms. A family takes two rooms, or even one, and then takes two or three lodgers to help it to pay the rent. Till the year before last it was difficult to get evidence that these inmates *were* lodgers, though a clever policeman could sometimes obtain it by stirring up an unwary sleeper, and asking him how much a night he paid for his bed; but by the Sanitary Act of 1866 the burden of proving that they are members of the same family is, in proceedings under the Act of 1851, to lie on the persons making the assertion.

In 1852 came the Metropolis Water Act, providing that the Water Companies should not in future draw supplies from any part of the Thames below Teddington Lock, and empowering parochial authorities to compel owners and occupiers of houses to lay water on. In the same year came the first Burial Act, empowering the Home Secretary to close burial-grounds;

and Acts to enforce Vaccination and to abate the Smoke Nuisance followed.

During a third visitation of cholera in 1853, Dr. Snow, and other careful observers, obtained strong evidence of the importance of pure air, and still more of pure water—the two great objects of Sanitary Legislation. With the reports on these subjects fresh in its memory, Parliament amended and consolidated the Nuisances Removal Acts, and passed the Metropolis Local Management Act. The need of improvement in the drainage of London had made itself felt in many ways, and the state of the river showed that nothing less than a change of system would be sufficient. To carry on drainage works on a large scale, in conjunction with embanking the Thames, required some strong central Government; and, for these purposes chiefly, the Act referred to, after remodelling the Vestries, created the Metropolitan Board of Works in the place of the old Commissioners of Sewers. Up to this time the metropolitan Vestries had been elected in different ways, according to local Acts, or customs obtaining in the parishes. In many of them vacancies were filled up by the votes of the

remaining members. Under the Act of 1855 all are alike elected by the rate-payers. In some cases Vestries were united for the purposes of the Act, under the name of "District Board of Works." The Metropolitan Board consists of representatives sent by the Vestries and the District Boards, and it raises money by means of "precepts" addressed to them. "The charge of the arterial sewers, and the responsibility for the drainage of London as a whole," was assigned to this Board; "the supervision of house-drainage, and the duty of constructing and repairing" all the smaller sewers, was imposed upon the Vestries.*

The vestries were, at the same time, made the local authorities for carrying out the Nuisances Removal Acts, which of itself gave them large and general powers.† For the better execution of these it was enacted that every vestry or district board should appoint a "medical officer of health," and an inspector of nuisances. It was provided that the former should be "a duly qualified medical practitioner of skill and experience," and that his duty should be "to inspect

* *Quart. Rev.* cxviii. 264.

† *Ib.*

and report periodically upon the sanitary condition of the district." The inspector or inspectors are practically his agents. Perhaps no single enactment has done more for the cause of sanitary reform than this; certainly no body of men have done more for it than the medical officers of health. The office has been very generally undertaken from interest in the work, by men of first-rate ability, whose time was worth far more than the remuneration offered by the vestries; and its duties have in most cases been carefully performed in spite of great discouragements. Many of them, I believe, keep books in which every house in the poorer and less healthy parts of their district is entered, and every particular about the drainage, water supply, and occupation of each, is noted down. Pains are taken to obtain early information as to deaths or illness, and this is followed by special inquiries wherever such seem necessary. A constant pressure is applied to the owners of ill-kept houses, by notices of what is wanted in the way of repairs; and where landlords are obstinate, and there is a tolerable chance of success, they are summoned before the magistrate. Thousands of houses have thus been supplied with water, the drainage of tens of

thousands has been improved, a great deal of lime-whiting has been done by the vestries themselves in archways and passages, and a great deal more, with whitewashing and repairs of all kinds, internal and external, by landlords at their suggestion. Whatever may be the cause or causes of the bad sanitary state of many parts of London, it cannot be charged, generally speaking, to any want of energy or ability in the medical officers of health. In many points they have been in advance of the law; thus the information which they procure from the Registrar General and from the parish doctor is still obtained as a matter of favour, not as a matter of right; and they were in the habit of systematically inspecting the worst houses of their district, long before the law gave them any right to claim admittance for this purpose. Their experience, too, has enabled them, in conjunction with the medical officer of the Privy Council, to suggest various amendments, several of which have now become law.

Since 1855 the improvements in sanitary law, excepting Acts for regulating special trades, such as baking, have been for the most part amendments of existing provisions. "The Sanitary Act, 1866," considerably enlarges the powers

of the Nuisance authorities, and stops up several gaps by which offenders used to escape. By it apparently a magistrate is enabled to give an order for inspection, whether there be distinct reason to believe that nuisances exist on the premises or not. Under it, too, the Nuisance authority may recover costs or expenses owing to it from the owner, out of the rent due to him from the occupier. This is an important provision, for where a landlord will not do certain things, such as improving bad drainage or providing an ash-pit, vestries are authorised to do what is necessary themselves, and to recover the expenses from him : but the property, where such interference is most needed, is often owned by "men of straw;" and when the authorities have done the work, they have often great difficulty in even finding the owner, though he may be reaping the benefit in increased rents from his tenants. An owner has been known to sell the repaired property and take himself off, whilst the vestry were vainly trying to get payment.

Another provision in the Act of 1866 is an important addition to sanitary law, though vestries are not obliged to adopt it. It has long been evident that ordinary tenement houses (that

is, houses built for one family, but now occupied by many,) frequently require inspection and regulation quite as much as common lodging-houses, if the health of the inhabitants is to be protected. A narrow court is often crowded like a barrack, but a most unbarrack-like state of dirt and disorder prevails.* A natural unwillingness to interfere so far with private rights, joined with some want of knowledge of the needs and habits of the very poor, delayed the passing of any such enactment; but it has been abundantly shown that, whatever objection the landlord may have to the visits of the sanitary officer, the tenants have none, but rather look on him as their protector; and the way was thus cleared for the further step. It is provided that any of the vestries in London (and the corresponding authorities in other large towns), may issue certain regulations for houses let in lodgings or occupied by more than one family, which, after confirmation by the Home Secretary, shall be binding on all such houses, unless they are already within the Common Lodging House Acts. The regulations may fix the number of occupants, and may provide,

* See pamphlet by Dr. Conway Evans on *Overcrowding and Typhus*, 1865.

amongst other things, for the registration and inspection of such houses, and for the cleansing and lime-whiting of them at stated times. It will be seen that these powers are in great measure analogous to those of the Common Lodging House Acts; the chief difference is that the former are entrusted to the vestries and not to the police. Several London parishes have already issued regulations; it remains to be seen whether they will be able to enforce them judiciously and effectually.

It is hard to see how over-crowding can be put a stop to in the present circumstances of London, but something may be done to limit it under such provisions as these, and much may be done by liberal lime-whiting, and attention to other sanitary requirements to diminish the physical evils that result from it. The evil itself needs more remedies than simple repression. The poor, it must be remembered are, many of them, in a very difficult position. What is a bricklayer's labourer with three or four children to do? He can hardly be expected to set aside more than 3s. or 3s. 6d. a-week for rent, yet for this in most parts of London he will find it impossible to get a room or rooms containing the

2000 cubic feet of air, which, according to the new "regulations" of some parishes, and according to the opinions of all competent authorities, are the minimum necessary for such a family, in addition to tolerable ventilation. The poor are becoming aware of the crusade that is being inaugurated against over-crowding, as they have long been aware of the unwillingness of landlords to take in many children. Thus it will soon become as difficult to ascertain the extent of over-crowding that exists, as it now is for landlords to ascertain how many children applicants for rooms really have.

The question of increasing the supply of dwellings is too large to be brought into this chapter; it requires a chapter to itself; but it is of course intimately related to the present subject. The present aim of sanitary legislation is, gradually to reduce the number of persons living in the overcrowded parts of the town to such a number as can live there healthily. Whilst there is a want of sufficient accommodation elsewhere, it is of course very difficult to accomplish this. Even if there were an abundance of suitable houses ready built in the suburbs, it would still be a slow process. Many of the wage-

receiving class cannot go far from their work without serious injury both to their employers and themselves. Many more are exceedingly unwilling to leave the neighbourhood they know and the connections they have formed. When the husband is out of work or ill, the wife keeps the family by doing a little washing or charing for families with whom she has become acquainted; she might not get such work for years in a new neighbourhood; at the worst they get credit at some shop where they are known; this also they would lose by moving. Some persons, who, in most respects, would be far better in the suburbs, cling to their own parish on account of the poor-law relief they are receiving, or on account of its endowed charities. It too often happens in London that the endowed charities increase in value (the land which belongs to them producing larger rents), whilst the objects of the charity—the poor of the parish—are actually diminishing in number. At any rate their houses become fewer, but just as widows are known to be attracted to one of the Surrey side parishes by certain charities in it confined to them, so the poor cling to the remaining houses in some of the central London parishes for the sake of the

Christmas and other gifts. Common sense suggests that such charities should, in some rough way, be made to follow the population, instead of remaining fastened to the soil ; at present they are in danger of becoming positive evils. It is most desirable that all persons who are not needed there should remove out of the heart of the town ; and everything should be done to facilitate this sifting process.

Some other much needed reforms are more obviously within the sphere of sanitary legislation. The most important and the most difficult relate to the supply of water to poor districts. At present the vestry or district board may compel a landlord to have water laid on, provided it can be obtained at a rate, not exceeding 3*d.* a-week per house ; but this is not quite satisfactory, as the Water Companies charge a higher rate than 3*d.* for houses let at more than 20*l.* a-year, and many tenement houses are let at more. To ensure a *sufficient* supply, where water is already laid on, the law takes a peculiar and indirect course : if the owner or occupier in such a case refuses to enlarge his cistern, or to take other necessary steps, the vestry (*i. e.* practically the medical officers of health) may pro-

ceed against him *as for overcrowding!* That is, they may compel him to reduce the number of his tenants till the house contains no more than his small cistern will suffice for. The remedy must be highly inconvenient to the poor tenants in whose interest it would be, that proceedings would be taken. But we have not yet reached the practical difficulties. If the poor are to be cured of frequenting the gin-palace and the beer-shop, it is evidently necessary that they should have clean and good water to drink; and it is very desirable that they should have plenty of clean water for other purposes. The usual practice of Water Companies is to turn on the water for half-an-hour or so in some part of the day: this is supposed to be enough to fill ordinary cisterns; and too often it is not turned on at all on Sundays, it being assumed, I suppose, that the contents of the cisterns will hold out from Saturday night to Monday morning. Now, in the first place, this arrangement presupposes cisterns; but in too many houses there are still no cisterns, or none deserving the name. In the next place, it assumes something like economy in the use of the water; for if five or six families are dependent for the day on one cistern, and if

any one of them grossly wastes the water, (by leaving the tap turned, for instance,) the rest are put to great inconvenience. In the third place, it is essential that the cisterns should be kept covered and clean; and this cleanliness of receptacles the medical officers of health have unfortunately no power to enforce, even when the vestry has exercised the power offered to it of framing special regulations. A filthy butt, or an uncovered cistern, is too often the only provision. All these difficulties would be overcome by the adoption of the constant water supply, which has been so often urged on the Water Companies. Drinking water, at least, the poor ought to be enabled to get from taps with a constant supply, such as the vestries, in some cases, put up for a time during the cholera in 1866. Perhaps my readers will excuse the grotesque horribleness of the following anecdote, as it illustrates our subject. It was during that very outbreak of cholera that a workman, whose business it was to keep his own and some neighbouring houses in repair, found that the pipe which conveyed the water from his cistern to the tap in his yard was stopped up. He got up to the cistern, which was a comparatively new one,

and had a tight-fitting lid, and applied his mouth to the stopped-up pipe. This appears to be the recognised practice. He sucked out a partly decomposed mouse, and the pipe was open again; but several families had narrowly escaped having all their water filtered through the mouse for some days! The only reason against a constant water supply is the Companies' fear of waste; but it seems probable that this may be guarded against by the use of a waste-preventing tap, or some such mechanical contrivance.

It is worth consideration whether some legal pressure might not now be brought to bear on tenants as well as landlords. Even when the landlord does his best, the carelessness and want of cleanliness of the poor is a constant source of injury to their neighbours as well as to themselves. When a parish issues "regulations," as some have done, referring to such minutiae as the washing of floors of rooms, it is clearly wrong in principle that the liability to a penalty for the breach of such a regulation should be the landlord's. When he has let the room, he has no legal right to enter it, without the tenant's permission; and though he can give the tenant notice to quit, it is by no means easy to get rid

of a weekly tenant, who wishes to give trouble. The same holds good of some cases of overcrowding. The vestries prefer dealing with the landlord; but they should at least reserve to themselves a discretion of proceeding against the tenant for some small penalty, if it be he and not the landlord who is to blame. It would be well, too, that there should be a penalty suspended over the tenant, if only *in terrorem*, to be inflicted in case of his wantonly injuring water apparatus, dust-bins, or other sanitary appliances. Without some co-operation on his part, we shall not be able to make much more progress in guarding the public health. The Ladies' Sanitary Association is doing much good by arranging lectures, and by circulating tracts on sanitary subjects; and it is to be hoped that clergymen, and all who see much of the poor, will do what they can to enlighten them about "common things." But self-control, and control of their children, are needed, at least as much as information, to enable them to make the best of their circumstances, and pull with their landlords.

On the whole, it must be admitted that much has been done, both in the way of legislation and of work, in the last few years. The Metropolitan

Board of Works has completed all the great arterial lines of sewer,* excepting the one which is dependent on the completion of the embankment of the Thames, and much progress has been made with this last great work. Some of the vestries, and most of the medical officers of health, have been doing good work in their own districts. Still our Metropolitan government does not give satisfaction, and it seems to be an open question with most people, whether we are to aim at improving the existing machinery, or at creating a fresh system in its place. Is it too late to adapt the government of the City, with its historic associations, and the world-wide renown which it has not lost, in spite of its shrunken condition at home, to the wants of the whole Metropolis? If our Metropolitan vestries govern districts larger than German principalities, such a government would have the welfare of the population of a good-sized kingdom in its hands. Such a sphere would surely induce men of ability and character to come forward and help in the work.† In the

* See *Quart. Rev.* cxviii. 271, for a description of the system of Main Drainage, with its three great sewers, at different levels, on either side of the river.

† London is too large now to be governed as a single community. The problem is how to organize it, so as to

meantime I would strongly urge all rate-payers to do their part in carrying out the present system of administration. In these days, good government depends much on the good sense and on the energy of those who are governed. Every rate-payer should do his best to get disinterested and competent men elected to the vestry, and men of sufficient leisure and capacity should allow themselves to be nominated for it. In at least one parish an association has been formed, the object of which is, in fact, to inform the public about local matters, and to recommend candidates for election to the vestry. The advantages of such a "caucus," if on a sufficiently wide basis and not a mere clique, are obvious. The association to which I refer is of much use in a quiet, unassuming way. The majority of those who attend its meetings are tradesmen, but there is little appearance of class feeling; all seem anxious to send the most creditable representatives they can to the vestry. Care is taken that

combine the advantages of local self-government with the capacity for united action. See Mr. Benjamin Scott's *Statistical Vindication*, pp. 173-187, for some account of Mr. Mill's plan for dividing the metropolis into ten municipalities, and for notices of some other schemes.

every part of the parish, or at least of that large section of the parish to which this association belongs, should have its representative, and pains are often bestowed to find a suitable candidate in some newly-formed neighbourhood. Good may be done, too, by private individuals ascertaining what their rights are, and complaining to the vestry when dust-bins are not emptied at proper intervals, or when other duties are not done. Employers might fairly extend this care to the houses of those they employ. All this would tend to the formation of an intelligent public opinion on these questions, and would strengthen the hands of the medical officer of health.

It should not be forgotten that the much-abused vestrymen are unpaid workers, and though we may sometimes have jobbery, and oftener parsimony, to complain of, there is no denying that much good useful work is done by them with little reward of any kind. I am disposed to think that such men deserve better of their neighbours than most of those who stand aloof and criticise them. If it be true that competent men are not to be found in some of the East End districts, the remedy must, I suppose, be to give large powers of compulsion to some central body—a depart-

ment of State by preference, responsible to Parliament, like the Poor Law Board. The interests of all London are so intimately connected that no one part can be allowed to keep habitually below the average standard. It is very desirable that the appointment of medical officers of health should be subject to confirmation by some such central body (as that of medical officers of unions is to confirmation by the Poor Law Board), and that they should not be removed, nor their salaries reduced, without reference to the same authority. This duty would be best performed probably, at present, by the Sanitary Committee of the Privy Council.

CHAPTER XIII.

ON DWELLINGS IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATIONS.

OBJECTS of attention and interest are so numerous in London that it is difficult for persons fully to take in even the most often-repeated facts. Much has been said of late in the newspapers and elsewhere about associations for improving the dwellings of the poor, but I am inclined to think that there are still a good many not ill-informed persons who give some one society credit for all the work of the sort that they hear of; and some who think that there cannot be much more to do, now that Mr. Peabody's quarter of a million has been devoted to this object. This induces me to offer some particulars as to the existing associations, of which there are no fewer than eight at work in London.

Overcrowding and dirt were recognised evils

in London, as we have seen, as far back as the reign of Queen Elizabeth. They grew with the growth of the town, and have increased rapidly during that "congestion of people to the Metropolis," which has been going on since the end of the last century. What sanitary regulations have done to diminish them has been in great measure counteracted by the extensive demolition of small houses for railways and other public works. The extent of these evils was laid bare by the inquiries of 1835-45, and so early as 1844 two associations had taken the field, to try what voluntary effort could do to cure them.

The Society for Improving the Condition of the Labouring Classes began in that year to build a range of improved houses (now in the possession of the London Labourers' Dwellings Society) for families and widows at Bagnigge Wells. Lord Shaftesbury is chairman of its committee, and it issues a quarterly publication, called *The Labourer's Friend*. The objects of the society include the encouragement of allotment gardens and provident institutions, but its work in London has been chiefly directed to the improvement of dwellings. It differs from all the other large as-

sociations in not professing to be of a commercial character; it obtained its capital by means of subscriptions and loans. Starting on this footing, it evidently could not hope to extend its operations very far, but, as a pioneer, its services have been invaluable. Its property contains examples of all the great classes of house-improvement; and, thanks principally to Mr. Henry Roberts, who acted for several years as hon. architect, most of its houses can well bear comparison with constructions of later date.

A Lodging-house for single men, built by this Society in George Street, to the south of New Oxford Street, was opened by the late Prince Consort in 1847. It is judiciously designed and well conducted, and has, no doubt, done much good; but though it is always full, and though its rents (2*s.* 6*d.* and 3*s.* a-week for a separate bed-closet, and use of common sitting-room and kitchen), as well as its accommodation, are higher than those of the neighbourhood generally, it has not on an average paid 4 per cent on its cost. The net returns from another men's lodging-house in Charles Street, Drury Lane, have been very large, averaging about 12 per

cent on the cost; but it is only held for a short lease, and no sinking fund has been provided. It is formed out of three old houses, and is frequented by men not much above the class that inhabit those adjoining. The charges are the same as in many ordinary lodging-houses, viz. 4*d.* a-night, or 2*s.* a-week. It is the universal practice to make no charge to regular customers for Sunday night. Apparently, it is so much the habit of the class who frequent Common Lodging-houses to live from hand to mouth, that it is not thought fair to ask a man for payment on Sundays, when trade is hampered.

A Model Building for families in Streatham Street, to the north of New Oxford Street, was finished by the Society in 1850. It is so built as to give each family its set of three or four rooms, and all necessary conveniences, within its own outer door. It is fire-proof, and afforded the first specimen of outside galleries as a means of approach to the sets of rooms. This block is six stories high, including a basement, and contains fifty-four tenements, which are much sought after by respectable mechanics.

The Society makes a profit on it, taken by itself, of about $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent,* and has made this from the first, though the rents are low, in proportion to the accommodation given—varying from 3s. to 7s.

In Tyndall's Buildings, Gray's Inn Lane, and Wild Court, Great Wild Street, Drury Lane, the Society has shown how to repair and improve old houses for families. The *cul-de-sac*, which bears the name of Tyndall's Buildings, was a fever-nest of the worst sort. It is now clean and airy, though still let in single rooms, and occupied by very poor people. These two properties appear to be paying 5 and 6 per cent, but they are leasehold, and there is no sinking fund. In the absence of this, and of particulars as to the length of the lease, it is impossible to judge how much leasehold property ought to pay. In both cases, I believe, the Society was induced to give a very high price, by the necessity of purchasing from several owners, and by its wish to secure them as fields for an experiment.

* This is after all deductions except sinking fund (the site is held for a long term), and the office and management expenses of the Society; a share of which ought of course to be set against each property.

The rents charged, too, are low compared with the rents of neighbouring properties, as well as in proportion to the accommodation given. They average from 2s. to 3s. a room. Altogether the Society provides accommodation for about 350 families, and for 258 single men.

This Society has been eminently useful in disseminating information at home and abroad. Most, if not all, of the London Associations, are under obligations to it. The plans of the Streattham Street block served as a starting-point for the originators of a very successful Model-Building movement in Boston, United States; and the Society's publications have only to divide the honour of having suggested the similar movement on the Continent with the Model Houses exhibited by Prince Albert in 1851,—themselves designed by Mr. Henry Roberts.*

Steps had been taken to form the *Metropo-*

* The most successful and extensive effort on the Continent has been that at Mulhouse, a manufacturing town in France, not far from Basle. (See Mr. Hole's *Homes of the Working Classes*, p. 170). A leading manufacturer, M. Jean Dolfus, after studying the Prince Consort's model houses, built a somewhat similar house himself; he then formed a share-holding Society, which has built about 700 houses, and has sold most of them, under

litan Association for improving the Dwellings of the Industrious Classes so early as 1841; but it did not begin to build till after its incorporation by Royal Charter in October 1845. The late Earl of Carlisle was one of the first Directors. This Society faced the financial difficulties of the subject from the first, undertaking to pay a dividend on its capital. It had many disadvantages to contend against. Upwards of 1600*l.* was expended in obtaining Charters of Incorporation, with a view to benefits which can now be secured under the Limited Liability Acts for 20*l.* and upwards, in proportion to nominal capital. Its operations, too, were necessarily experimental. Its first building (a block for 110 families in Old St. Pancras Road) was opened in December 1847, and was the first of those piles, divided into sets of two and three rooms, suitable for mechanics, to which the name of "Model Buildings" is gene-

certain conditions, to occupiers of the mechanic class. Berlin, Florence, Paris, and several other cities have "followed the example given in England;" and England must exert herself if she does not wish to be outstripped by her pupils. See Mr. H. Roberts' papers in *Transactions of the Social Science Association*, 1858, and in *Labourer's Friend*, for January, 1868. Also, Mr. Roberts' *Dwellings for the Labouring Classes*, 1867, p. 56.

rally given. The rents vary from 4s. 3d. for two rooms to 7s. 6d. for three rooms, with appurtenances. It is well constructed, and (taken by itself) is now paying 6 per cent, net, after a deduction for a sinking fund; but its average returns have been much less than this.* The Soho Chambers (36 Compton Street), which were taken on lease in 1851, and fitted up as lodgings for single men, have never filled well, and have been a heavy loss to the Association, year after year. The Metropolitan Chambers, built in 1849, for 234 single men, in Albert Street, Mile End New Town, have also paid very badly, owing, perhaps, to their being built on too large a scale, especially as they are not in a very crowded part of the town. The operation of the Common Lodging House Act has since made it unneces-

* This building and some others belonging to the Association have been at a slight disadvantage till lately, in having to pay house-tax. This tax is only levied on houses of the value of 20*l.* a-year; and the Courts decided that tenements, like those in the Streatham Street building, approached by an open gallery, were separate houses, and therefore were exempt, but that tenements, like those in the St. Pancras Road, opening on a staircase, were not separate houses. A Treasury order has recently been obtained, however, by the Association, relieving all such "distinct tenements" in their possession from this payment.

sary for improvers of dwellings to supply lodgings for single men; and it is unfortunate that experiments in this direction should have made the general operations of the Association appear less successful than they have really been. For some years the Association did not on an average pay its shareholders 2 per cent; but there has been a steady improvement in its finances, and its last three dividends have been $3\frac{1}{2}$. Its losses by bad debts have been very small. The Secretary, Mr. Gatliff, stated, in 1863, that against 82,565*l.*, paid to the Association in seventeen years, as weekly rents, its losses by unpaid rent had not amounted to 400*l.* This agrees, I believe, with the general experience of all who have provided improved dwellings for mechanics.

The Association has been of material assistance to the general movement. Its reports and statements of accounts have always been clear and business-like, and have served as a model to some of the younger societies. It has provided accommodation in all for 682 families and 362 single men. It has recently built 96 cottages at Penge, near the Crystal Palace, and has arranged with the London Chatham and Dover Railway to bring the tenants daily to their work

in London at 2s. a week. It has also built a large block for 149 families, called Gatliff Buildings, between Ebury Square and Chelsea Bridge; Lord Westminster advancing the funds for this at 3 per cent, on condition that the rents charged should be according to a certain low scale. They range from 2s. 9d. for a single room to 4s. 3d. and 5s. 6d. for two and three rooms. The building was expressly intended to provide accommodation for the occupants of some small houses that were about to be pulled down. Ingestre Buildings, in New Street, Golden Square, belong to this association. The rents vary from 6s. to 7s. 6d. a set of rooms, and they are much sought after, even at this high rate, by journey-men tailors, on account of their nearness to the shops of the West End.

The Parochial Association for Improving the Dwellings of the Labouring Classes, in St. George's, Hanover Square, was next formed,—in 1849. Its capital consists of donations, and it owns two buildings, one in Grosvenor Mews, Davies Street, and the other in Grosvenor Market, containing together forty-seven tenements. The block in Grosvenor Mews, which contains thirty-two tenements of two rooms each, and was built

by Mr. Newson from plans given him by Mr. Henry Roberts, was purchased from him by the Association for 3200*l.* This of course does not include any payment for site.

The Marylebone Association, established in 1854, though composed of shareholders and working on a much larger scale, is also local. In such an association the benevolent element almost necessarily predominates, and the commercial element is likely to be weak. The result which the promoters chiefly look for is the improvement of certain houses and people, and to effect this they are much tempted to spend money more freely than would be justifiable from a merely commercial point of view. In its early years the Association did not pay its shareholders more than 1 per cent, but it is now paying 3½ per cent, and has issued some preference shares (payable out of the rents of a late purchase) at 4½ per cent. On the other hand, it has gone down to the very poor, and has probably been more successful than any other society in keeping and improving the people whom it found in occupation of the old houses which it purchased. Gray's Buildings, Duke Street, Manchester Square (twenty-one repaired houses, let in single rooms at about 2*s.* 6*d.*

a-week,) are the best example of this. They are still occupied by the same class, and by some of the same people, that were in possession of them before they came into the hands of the Association twelve years ago. Those interested in that branch of the subject may learn much from the Secretary of the Association about the best way of dealing with Irish and other very poor tenants, and about the amount of accommodation which it is expedient to give to such. For instance, experience proves that in houses intended for this class, it is not expedient to lay water on to the upper floors; the sink, which is a necessary accompaniment of the tap, gets stopped up by misuse, and becomes a positive evil. In some of the Association's new buildings in Lisson Grove, single and double rooms are let at 2s. and 3s. 9d. a-week, which brings them within the reach of the unskilled labourer. It provides accommodation for 418 families.

The Strand Buildings Company was formed in 1857 under the Labourers' Dwellings' Act of 1855, which limited the liability of shareholders in such undertakings, at a very trifling expense, before the general Limited Liability Acts were passed. Their only building is a "well and

economically arranged pile of dwellings"* for families, in Eagle Court, opposite Somerset House. Their tenants pay 4s. to 5s. 6d. a-week for two rooms, and the shareholders have received a dividend averaging about 4 per cent.

The Central London Dwellings Improvement Company, Limited, was formed in 1861, by some gentlemen, chiefly belonging to Lincoln's Inn, who wished to help on the movement in the West Central postal district, and to try for themselves whether a company might not get a fair profit out of weekly house property,† and yet deal considerably with the tenants. This company has hitherto confined itself to repairing old houses. It has purchased three freehold properties, and one long leasehold—all in the neighbourhood of Drury Lane, and all in a very bad state. It has, in the case of each purchase, been obliged to turn out most of the occupants, in order to clean and repair the houses; but it has received back many of them, and deals with the very lowest class of industrious

* Mr. H. Roberts' paper in *Social Science Transactions*, 1858.

† Houses, the rents of which are collected weekly, are often spoken of as "weekly property."

poor—Covent Garden porters, labourers, and others. The rents average 4s. for two rooms, and 2s. 9d. for one; for this, little more accommodation is given than would be given by any ordinary landlord; but pains are taken to keep the houses clean and in good repair, and attention is paid to any reasonable complaint on the part of the tenants. The dividend paid since November 1862 has varied between 3 and 4 per cent. The company provides accommodation for about 180 families, some taking single rooms, others “rooms and slips”—a room, that is, with a slip partitioned off,—others two rooms.

The London Labourers' Dwellings' Society, Limited, formed in the same year (1861), can say a thing which no other Metropolitan improvement company can;—that it has paid all its shareholders 5 per cent on every pound of their shares from the time of their being taken up. Its chief promoters were shareholders in the very successful Cottage Improvement Society at Hastings, and it was arranged that Dr. Greenhill, one of the founders and the secretary of that society, should endeavour to establish a similar society in London. It began by making a large purchase of houses in St. George's-in-the-East—not in

very bad condition, and not occupied by a very low class of tenants; hence it was able to pay a dividend at the end of its first half-year. It has since then made several purchases of houses in the east of London and in Lambeth, some of them occupied by mechanics, others by the unskilled class; and it is now covering a large piece of land, which once formed a part of Vauxhall Gardens, with houses, each flat of which contains three good rooms, with all necessary appurtenances, suitable for a mechanic with a small family. The rents in these houses vary from 7s. to 8s. a tenement, and in the society's other properties from 12s. for a house to 1s. 6d. for a room. Its tenants number 215 families—many of these, having a whole house, are allowed to take lodgers. This society, besides a sufficient sinking fund, has a reserve fund, amounting to 3962*l.*, the result, in great part, of profits made on two forced sales to railway companies.

The Improved Industrial Dwellings' Company, Limited, formed in 1863, after a meeting at the Mansion House, owes its existence to Alderman Sir Sydney Waterlow. He is said to have long tried in vain to induce the Corporation to build houses on a large scale for the working

class on some of several vacant sites at their disposal. In 1862 he took the matter in hand himself, and built a block containing twenty tenements, adapted for mechanics, in Mark Street, Finsbury, to the north-west of the Shoreditch Railway Station. This block, in a line with which four similar blocks have since been built,* is on a plan suggested, it is said, by Prince Albert's model cottages, but worked out, and applied to houses of five storeys, by Alderman Waterlow and his builder, Mr. Matthew Allen. The cost of the building is stated to have been reduced 25 per cent by the use of a substitute for stone, composed of Portland cement and various porous calcined substances, in the staircases, floors, arches, and some other parts.† Langbourn Buildings, as the blocks in question are called, were built at an expense of only 110*l.* a tenement, and the net profits are said to exceed 8 per cent. In 1863 the Industrial Dwellings' Company was formed, to multiply such buildings. It has built blocks in Old St. Pancras Road, in Wapping, Southwark,

* I here use the word "block," in the sense in which it is always used by this Company, of the sixteen or twenty tenements reached by a single staircase.

† Mr. Mays' Pamphlet on *Langbourn Buildings*, (Hardwicke), p. 13.

and elsewhere, and has thus provided accommodation for 376 families, at rents varying from 7s. 6d. to 4s. 6d. For these rents the tenants get a set of small rooms, containing all in it that a house should have, the flat roof alone being used in common, as a drying-ground. The rooms are plastered and papered, and are much liked by the occupants. It is evident that great attention to cleanliness is required when scullery, sink, and closet, are in close proximity to the living and sleeping rooms; but I am not aware that the tenants have been found wanting in this respect. The Company's blocks have cost somewhat more per tenement than Langbourn Buildings, but they are still, probably, the cheapest dwellings that have been built in London, in proportion to the accommodation supplied. Whether Mr. Allen's new material will wear as well as stone remains to be proved: there seems reason to believe that some such substitute for stone may be used with great advantage.* The Company has paid its share-

* See Mr. E. Chadwick's Report to the Committee of Council on the Model Dwellings of the Paris International Exhibition, published in the *Illustrated London News* of July 6th, 1867.

holders 5 per cent from the time when its first building was finished, after putting aside a sufficient sum to sinking and reserve funds, and it seems likely to keep up the same rate, or even to increase it. I should add that, in 1864, the Corporation, stimulated by Sir S. Waterlow's example, and by the great demolition of poor men's houses that was then going on under different Railway and other Acts, proceeded, under a power conferred on them by the Clerkenwell Improvement Act, to build several lofty blocks, on much the same plan as his, at the north end of Farringdon Road. They contain 168 tenements, let at 4s. 6d. to 7s., besides twelve shops.

The Industrial Dwellings' Company closes the list of well-established Metropolitan Associations. The Lambeth Association, whose pile of dwellings, with its external galleries, is well known to travellers by the South-Western Railway, has long been in difficulties, and one or two other Associations which have been formed, have not yet made much progress.

Amongst numerous efforts, made by private persons in the same direction, two especially deserve notice—those of Miss Burdett Coutts, and of Mr. Peabody. About 1856, Miss Coutts

purchased a large piece of land, to the north-east of Shoreditch Church, once known as Nova Scotia Gardens. At a former time it had been covered with small houses, of one or two storeys in height, notorious as the haunt of criminals. On this her architect, Mr. Darbishire, erected four large blocks of Model Buildings, forming Columbia Square; and he is now completing a magnificent market-house, and an open market, surrounded by a colonnade and shops, on the ground adjoining. The market is apparently to be the Covent Garden of that part of London; and is no doubt intended to provide work for the occupants of Columbia Square. Its architectural merit well deserves a visit. The blocks are intended for respectable members of the unskilled labour class. The rooms are let at less than their market value, and produce a profit of not more than $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. On the other hand, they no doubt fulfil Miss Burdett Coutts' intention, in supplying improved house accommodation to as low a section of the community as is able to make a good use of it. The greatest attention has been paid to good sanitary arrangements and to durability. The blocks are very well and substantially built, but no paper

or plaster is allowed in the tenants' rooms ; the bricks, of which the walls are built, show through a wash of colour. The rooms open on a common passage, and lavatories are used in common by three or four families, those for men being of course distinct from those for women. The top floor is given up to laundries and a covered drying-ground, which is much valued. A co-operative store has been established by some of the tenants on the ground-floor, and is, I believe, succeeding. The rents charged for similar sets of rooms do not vary with the floor. It is found that, water being laid on to all the floors, and the drying-ground being above, tenants like the upper as well as the lower floors. There are 183 tenements ; the rents are 2*s.* and 2*s.* 6*d.* for a few single rooms ; 3*s.* 6*d.* for sets of two rooms, and 4*s.* and 5*s.* for sets of three rooms.

The circumstances of Mr. Peabody's magnificent gifts are fresh in every one's recollection. In March 1862, he handed over a sum of 150,000*l.* to Lord Stanley, and four other trustees, for the benefit of the respectable poor of London. Without limiting the discretion of the trustees, he suggested that they should consider whether they might not with advantage " apply the fund,

or a portion of it, in the construction of such dwellings for the poor as may combine, in the utmost possible degree, the essentials of healthfulness, comfort, social enjoyment, and economy."* They acted on this suggestion, and have built several large blocks under the professional advice of Mr. Darbshire, and on very much the same plan as those of Miss Burdett Coutts. The first was opened in February 1864. It is in Commercial Street, Spitalfields, to the south of the Shoreditch Railway Station,† and contains fifty-seven tenements, besides eight shops, and the rooms that go with them. The general ef-

* Letter of 12th March, 1862, quoted in the *Statement of the Trustees*, 1865.

† The terminus of the Great Eastern Railway in Shoreditch (also called the Bishopsgate Street Station) has three of the recent Model Buildings within a short distance of it. Supposing a visitor to go by the Underground Railway to Moorgate Street, and then to bear north and north-east across Finsbury Square and Worship Street, and up Paul Street, he will soon see Langbourn Buildings, Alderman Waterlow's first experiment, on his right hand. He should then bear north-east again past Shoreditch Church, and turn down Crab Tree Row, to Columbia Square, and Miss B. Coutts' new Market. Then, if he turns south, passes the front of the Great Eastern Terminus, and walks down Commercial Street, he will see the first finished block of Peabody Buildings on his right, before he reaches Spitalfields Church.

fect of the block is good. It is free from baldness; yet the ornament and colour used to relieve it are obtained entirely from red bricks, sparingly used. Most of the ground-floor is occupied by shops of a high class; the approach to these and to the seven rooms going with each of them is quite distinct from that to the smaller tenements. The top floor is given up, as in Miss Coutts' houses, to laundries and a covered drying-ground. In September 1865, four more handsome blocks were opened a few yards to the west of Essex Street, Islington, under the name of Peabody Square. These blocks contain 19 single rooms, at 2*s.* 6*d.*; 100 pairs of rooms at 4*s.*, and 31 sets of three rooms at 5*s.* The tenants are persons earning from 10*s.* to 28*s.* a-week; and it is said that, on an average, they earn less than 20*s.* As I said, in a former chapter, an unskilled labourer in London earns 18*s.* to 20*s.* when in work; so that the trustees appear to have reached just that class of labouring poor, which the terms of Mr. Peabody's letter indicated. The superintendents of the buildings say that the occupants are "too poor." Mr. Peabody's satisfaction with what has been done has been shown by his second gift of 100,000*l.*, in 1866;

which is, however, not to be taken out of the securities in which it is invested till 1869. A third set of buildings for 200 families was opened in Shadwell, in December 1866; and three more blocks are shortly to be commenced on a site that has been purchased in Westminster. The net profit on all the buildings has hitherto averaged $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

These buildings and Miss Coutts', with their long common passages and bare brick interiors, are in marked contrast to the self-contained tenements and papered rooms of Sir S. Waterlow's blocks; but as the two styles are meant for different classes, it is possible that each may be best for its purpose. It would be a dangerous experiment to take fifty families out of Columbia Square and transfer them to Langbourn Buildings; or, as I ought rather to say, it would not answer to introduce fifty families into Langbourn Buildings of the class that are received in Columbia Square; for those who are already in Miss Coutts' houses would no doubt have profited by the training thus received. Ordinary persons of the class would hardly keep the sets of rooms and their belongings clean and sweet. It must be remembered, however, that Miss Coutts' and the

Peabody houses for the unskilled labourer unfortunately cost considerably more than Sir S. Waterlow's houses for the mechanic; and the difference is too great to be accounted for by the laundries and drying-grounds of the former, which of course may be looked on as a gift to the tenants. The cost must be materially reduced before commercial enterprise can follow in the footsteps of these princely donors.

I may refer again to Gatliff Buildings, near Chelsea Bridge, built by the Metropolitan Association from Mr. Cundy's plans, as a specimen of a recent building which is adapted for the same class as the Peabody Buildings, but has been built more cheaply. It contains 149 tenements, 29 of them single rooms, and cost 19,500*l.*, that is, about 130*l.* a tenement.

A block erected by the trustees of the very successful Duck Lane Working Men's Club, to the south of Victoria Street, and not far from Mr. Gibbs' handsome Rochester Buildings, also deserves notice, as built for, and occupied by, costermongers and others of the irregular labour class. The rents vary from 1*s.* 6*d.* for one room to 3*s.* 6*d.* for two. The block, built from Mr. Eyton's designs, is well adapted for its purpose,

and is liked by the tenants. Like Gatliff Buildings it was built with money advanced by Lord Westminster at low interest. As it contains club-rooms and a co-operative store, it is impossible to say how much it cost per tenement.

Two blocks built by Mr. Newson in Grosvenor Mews, (one of which I have already referred to, as sold to the Hanover Square Association,) are stated to have been built by him, some fifteen years ago, at less than 100*l.* for the tenement of two rooms. This is the lowest rate of which I have heard, and probably it would not be possible to build them for the same price now, as labour and some materials are dearer than they were. I think it is Mr. Hole who says that an Arkwright is wanted in the building trade; certainly if building could be cheapened by the introduction of machinery in making bricks, or in any other way, that would go far towards solving our problem.*

A feeling of satisfaction may steal over the minds of some of my readers as my pages bring before them the numerous efforts which

* See *The Report of a Committee of the Society of Arts on the Statistics of Dwellings' Improvement* for particulars as to cost, &c., of buildings down to 1864.

have been made to improve the houses of the poor. If I could now make an equally definite statement as to what remains undone, and as to the evil of the existing state of things, any such feeling of satisfaction would soon give place to utter horror. I cannot and need not attempt this. A very little exercise of observation on the part of Londoners will show them how miserably housed the great majority of the poor are; and I hope that others, who have not the opportunity of observing for themselves, will make the mental effort necessary to free themselves from the impression that any great part of the work of improvement is yet done. Improved dwellings of different kinds have been provided, on the closest calculation I can make, for about 3500 families; it is obvious that, though this is not an inconsiderable result in itself, it is quite out of proportion to the wants of a city containing 3,000,000 inhabitants, the majority of whom of course are mechanics, labourers, or irregular poor.* I do not forget that improvements have an in-

* Mr. Rendle, late Medical Officer of Health of St. George the Martyr, Southwark, stated in December, 1866, that his parish alone contained about 8000 houses, 5000 of which were inhabited by poor who occupied one or two rooms. *Social Science Journal* for Dec. 21st, 1866, p. 7P.

direct influence on neighbouring property, but this is more than counterbalanced by the extensive demolition of small houses, that there has been of late years. Many more poor persons must have been turned out in the last ten years, under parliamentary powers, than have been provided for by all the Dwellings' Improvement Associations together.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE DWELLINGS OF THE POOR.

THE work of the Societies that I have referred to divides itself into building new houses and improving old ones. Both are necessary; but, at present, increase in the number of houses seems to me the more urgent need. Great part of the work of improving existing houses belongs to sanitary law, and might be accomplished by the medical officers of health, if their chief practical difficulty—the want of a sufficient number of houses—were removed. Weekly houses cannot be brought into a satisfactory state till overcrowding is put down; and, under present circumstances, even if vestries and their medical officers make up their minds to employ the powers of the Act of 1866* to the utmost, the pressure upon the poor is so great, that it will

* See sup. p. 248.

not be possible to prevent systematic evasion of the regulations laid down. The two modes by which overcrowding may be effectually diminished are—(1) The building of more houses; (2) The encouraging of all who can to move out of the central and overcrowded parts of the town. A Royal Commission, composed of men of practical ability, might do much to ascertain how great the want of houses is, and to decide which of the numerous suggestions that have been thrown out, as to modes of providing them, are of real value. I am not disposed to think Government, or even local authorities, the right agency for doing the work; but a Commission might point out ways in which Government action would help by removing obstacles or offering inducements. It is all important that the increase of house-accommodation for the poor should be recognised distinctly as a matter of national importance. It must be made the interest of somebody to supply it, and then the work will be gradually done.

The first essential is to attract capital. It is said that builders expect a clear profit of 8 or 10 per cent, at least. People do not always use the expression "clear profit" in the strictest

sense,—still some such return is, no doubt, looked for. Persons employing capital in trade require high interest to counterbalance much anxiety and occasional losses. But it is no less certain that a Company, paying its shareholders a dividend of 5 per cent, *and likely to continue to pay this*, will be able to get a fair amount of capital. Five per cent is as much interest as any person, not possessed of special knowledge, has a right to expect, provided that it is paid him without trouble or risk. A Company, for supplying houses to mechanics, ought not now to have much difficulty in satisfying these conditions. To secure permanence in the dividend, there must of course be a Reserve Fund corresponding to the deterioration of freehold houses, and a Sinking Fund sufficient to balance the diminution in value of leaseholds. The houses would, of course, be insured against fire. The value of the sites would almost certainly increase as time passed; and if the affairs of the Company were tolerably well managed, the dividend would be much more likely to increase than to diminish. We have seen that the two last-formed Associations come up to this standard, though they originated in philanthropic

motives, and are composed of men of little special experience. It is to be hoped that they may extend their operations rapidly, and that others may soon follow in their footsteps. The Loan offered by Government, about which I propose to say more presently, may contribute towards this. So may the co-operation of the mechanics themselves. They, and the class immediately above them, small tradesmen and others, have already done much by means of Building Societies to encourage the building of small houses in the suburbs.* It is very desirable that the same class of investors should turn their attention also to the building of blocks, adapted to the requirements of the town. This they may, probably, best do through Limited Companies. There should be two classes of shares, and working men should be allowed to pay theirs up in small instalments. Facilities should then be given to shareholders to become owners of tenements; or, if legal difficulties prevented this for a time, they might

* These Societies do not themselves build, but advance money to their members to enable them to erect or purchase houses. The London and General Permanent Society (337 Strand) is a good example of a young but well-conducted Society of the kind.

be allowed to take a long lease of them from the Company at a rent considerably below that charged to ordinary weekly tenants. The prospect of owning a house offers a strong motive for saving; and to the not unfounded objection that houses, belonging to men dependent on weekly wages, are likely to get into bad repair, I answer that, in a place like London, Sanitary Law ought to be enabled so far to over-ride the justly revered maxim, that every man's house is his castle, as may be necessary to compel a man either to keep his house or rooms from becoming a nuisance to his neighbours, or to part with it to some one who will.

The want or dearness of building ground, in and near London, is an almost more serious difficulty than the want of capital; but something has been done to overcome this. We are learning to make more use of our ground. When private houses and hotels, as well as warehouses, are rising to six, seven, and eight storeys, working men's houses must rise too; and any prejudice that there may have been against "Model Buildings" is now quite a thing of the past. I know of no such pile of building which is not habitually full. I believe I may add that there

is none which does not refuse as many eligible applicants as it accepts. It will be long before such blocks can take the place of the many small houses, which have been built of late years for working men, even in thoroughfares wide enough for lofty piles; but it is to be hoped that steady progress will be made in that direction. Want of capital, the wish to obtain a higher class of tenants and custom, all combine, however, to make ordinary builders adhere to the old type. In some of the less eligible outskirts of the town, houses after houses are built with stuccoed fronts, and accommodation suited for a single middle-class family; but the neighbourhood does not improve as the builder anticipates; and, before long, the six rooms are occupied by from three to six families of the mechanic or labouring class. Surely it would answer the purposes of all parties better if such houses were designed at first for the class and the numbers that ultimately get possession of them.

One advantage of large blocks, especially when the ground and first floors are given up to high-class shops, and the tenements above them have an altogether distinct entrance, is,

that many sites thus become available for our purpose, which would formerly have been thought too valuable, or unsuitable. Such piles as the Peabody Buildings in Commercial Street, Spitalfields, or as the block which Sir M. Peto has built in the Mall, to the west of Kensington Palace Gardens (though this contains no shops), would be a credit to any thoroughfare. Why should not the Metropolitan Board of Works arrange for the building of some such on some of the numerous sites that will be rendered available by the works in connexion with the Thames embankment?

Those who wish for a roof to themselves must live further from the centre. The increasing facilities for locomotion are making it easier for working men, and especially for men in regular employment, to live in suburban districts. The Metropolitan Railway has long run Workmen's trains in the early morning, and has allowed the holders of Workmen's tickets to return by any train in the evening. If all the Metropolitan Companies adopt these liberal regulations, as it will probably be worth their while to do, the crowded parts of the town may be perceptibly relieved by the practice. Employers

of labour can do much to encourage their men thus to take their families into the country. Sometimes they are able to move their own works out of London, and to take their men with them. The founder of Silver Town, in Essex, and others like him, are public benefactors.

The question of increasing house-accommodation for mechanics is not very difficult—at least in theory—but how is it to be increased for those who earn 20s. a week and less? They cannot pay more rent than 2s. to 4s. a week with any certainty, and 5s. to 6s. seems the very smallest amount for which two rooms can be provided in new buildings, if they are to be made to pay. To some extent these men will gain by the increase of houses for the mechanic class. They will step into houses vacated by them, just as the mechanics are in some parts of London getting possession of houses which have been occupied by the professional class. This is all in the natural course of things; but this process can hardly do more than provide for the ordinary growth of London, especially as the new buildings are generally in the place of others, though smaller, houses, and therefore are not clear gain. Something may be done by

the same Companies that build for mechanics, building for the lower class also, but they will be unwilling to do this to any great extent, unless they can make a profit on the transaction. Here a real difficulty meets us. The class in question is a very large one, and it is exceedingly important that they should be well housed, if only from the low motives of economising their labour, and preserving the public health: yet, in London, from various causes (their own want of prudence among them), it is hardly possible to build tenements for them, containing any reasonable accommodation, at a rent which they can be expected to pay. Single rooms can be provided, better than the greater number of those they now occupy; but this is not a satisfactory solution of the problem. In agricultural neighbourhoods a similar difficulty is felt; but right-thinking landlords are content to let cottages at an insufficient rent, and to believe that it is made up to them by the greater efficiency of the labourer. In London, to borrow a sentence from Dr. Gibbon, the Officer of Health for the Holborn District, "the indirect profits go into the pockets of the employer of labour and of the general public, not into those

of the capitalist and builder who create them.” This is a strong argument for the public helping in the work. If money were the only requisite, it ought to be given liberally; if 15,000,000*l.*, as has been roughly calculated, or 30,000,000*l.*, would put London into a good sanitary state, it would be well worth while to give it from the Imperial Exchequer. It would be much more reproductive than most additions to the National Debt. But I am far from wishing for this, or from thinking that Government should seek to do anything but stimulate private enterprise.

The most legitimate form which public assistance could take is, no doubt, that of a loan at low interest. This is already offered. “The Labouring Classes Dwellings’ Act, 1866,” provides that any company or landowner entitled for not less than fifty years, may borrow from the Public Works Loan Commissioners, for the purpose of purchasing lands, and erecting dwellings for the labouring classes.* The loan is not to be at a

* The Government of the day was induced to propose this Act by the wish to afford some rough, general compensation to the large number of poor then on the point of being expelled from the site on which the new Law Courts are to be built. Besides providing for loans, it

lower rate than four per cent, nor to exceed half the value of the land or dwellings to be mortgaged to them; and it is to be repaid in a period of not more than forty years. These are not very liberal terms, and there is necessarily some trouble and expense in obtaining the money, still the loan has done good. The Metropolitan Association and the Industrial Dwellings Company have already obtained considerable advances. By paying a little over five per cent a year they will repay principal and interest in forty years, and will then find themselves in a much improved position. Perhaps after a time discretion may be given to some central authority to lend money, in special cases, at $3\frac{1}{2}$, or even at 3, per cent, regard being had both to the sufficiency of the security offered and to the usefulness of the particular scheme. They can already lend money at such interest as they think fit, upon the

gives power to tenants for life, and persons under disability, to sell land to builders of dwellings for the labouring classes, and enables railways and other commercial companies to provide dwellings for those whom they employ. See a Paper *On the Legislative Measures necessary for the improvement of the Dwellings of the Labouring Class*, by Mr. Horace Davey, in *Social Science* for Dec. 21, 1866.

security of rates, for the purpose of erecting baths and wash-houses.*

This point might be considered with advantage by a Royal Commission. They might inquire, too, whether a part of the funds of some of the metropolitan charities, for which it is said that the Charity Commissioners have difficulty in finding a use, might not be so applied as to help forward this movement. Various proposals that have been made by Mr. Hare and others with reference to rating would also, no doubt, come before them. When it was thought a matter of public importance to encourage the making of canals, it was, I believe, sometimes enacted that for a certain number of years they should not be rated at a higher value than the land through which they passed had been; it might be worth while to provide in a similar way that improved house property of less than a certain rental should remain at its old rating for (say) twenty-one years.† At present, if a man pulls down a number of small

* Memorandum by Alderman Waterlow, quoted in Mr. Hole's *Homes of the Working Classes*, p. 99.

† Some such remission of rates and taxes has been accorded to private speculations in improved dwellings by the municipal authorities of Paris. See *Labourers' Friend* for January 31st, 1859.

houses rated at 10*l.* a-year each, and sending numerous patients to the Fever Hospital and Workhouse Infirmary, and replaces them by a lofty pile of buildings for the respectable poor, he will at once be called on to pay twice the amount of rates he paid before, though his net profits will certainly not be doubled. Existing houses, even though they be small, can seldom be bought in London at such a price as to make it expedient to pull them down and build higher, unless they be in very bad condition indeed. This will materially delay that replacing of two and three-storied houses with loftier buildings, which sanguine people talk of so hopefully. The benefit conferred by such a privilege, with respect to rating, would be very trifling; but the mere name of it would be worth something. Every little assistance would hasten forward the accomplishment of our object, provided it were of a kind to encourage, and not to deter, private speculators.

Whilst all means are taken to encourage the builders of new houses, the old houses must, of course, not be lost sight of. Private enterprise may do something to improve them, and so may sanitary law; but, sooner or later, compulsory

powers of purchase in some form must be called in to assist these in the work.

There is much weekly property in London which, from the contracted nature of the site, is absolutely unimprovable. Take the sale-list of one of the large house-agents, pick out six or seven of the cheapest lots, and visit them; you will find in three or four of the properties that the houses have neither yards nor back-doors, that they are little two-storied houses, approached, perhaps, by a narrow doorway and passage, which you have passed a thousand times without ever suspecting that it led to a court, whilst possibly the front windows (the only windows there are) will be within four feet of a dead wall. A Dwellings' Improvement Company can make nothing of such places, unless it can persuade the owner of this dead wall, or of some other adjoining property, which may not itself be in bad order, to sell his interest to them. Such cases as these, in which from the situation of the property the owner himself is unable to improve it, most need special legislation, but even in the commoner case of property which owners might improve, but do not, the power of passive resistance is so strong, that it is highly desirable that powers should be

given to compel a sale, either by the bill which Mr. M'Cullagh Torrens now has before Parliament, or by some similar measure. The chief objection to Mr. Torrens' plan has been, that he gave the initiative to the local authority exclusively, and made the Vestries the local authorities for London. It did not seem likely that they would exert themselves in the matter, nor would they be suitable bodies to improve or manage house property. In Committee, however, the Metropolitan Board of Works has been made the local authority for all London, except the City; and the Board is directed to consider any complaint made to it by a Medical Officer of Health, or by four householders. The bill contains a provision that after the local authority has taken preliminary steps, it may make the property over to a Dwellings' Company to improve and manage. Should this measure fail to pass or to work, perhaps a large Improvement Company might be formed for London, and entrusted with powers of compulsory purchase in cases in which the Health Department of the Privy Council, or some other authority, directly responsible to Parliament, was satisfied that it was of public importance that such compulsory purchase should

be made. A company armed with such powers would not need to use them very often, they would generally come to terms with the owners; but they would have recourse to their powers, if an owner was unreasonable, whether he was himself the owner of a fever-nest, or only so unfortunate as to own property adjoining one, the position of which made it impossible to improve the fever-nest away.*

It requires careful investigation to ascertain in how bad a state much of the weekly property is. In 1862 a court of seventeen houses changed hands. The drainage was represented to be good; but on examination it proved to be utterly insufficient; there was a good eighteen-inch pipe down the middle of the Court, but not a single house was properly connected with it. In some cases pipes had been carelessly thrown in and covered up, in others there was no pretence of anything beyond the old-fashioned brick drain, which will carry little or no solid matter. Consequently there was a mass of filth below the

* In Paris the *commune* has power to take such properties, and the compensation is paid out of the funds of the *bureau de bienfaisance* (sup. p. 222). See *Manuel des Œuvres charitables de Paris*, 1867, p. 384.

pavement at the backs of the houses, which had eaten into the bricks and made it necessary in many cases to renew the foundations.

Weekly property occupied by the very poor must always be troublesome to manage; individual gentlemen will never take to it; probably companies of gentlemen are the best alternative from the grasping and often needy landlords who at present own the greater part of it. Companies can hardly avoid acting on general rules, and this leads to the sort of fairness and firmness which are essential in dealing with a low class of tenants. They can reduce the number of middlemen too, though it is hardly possible altogether to dispense with them. There must be a collector, and wherever a property consists of fifteen or twenty houses, of any size, let in rooms to the very poor, it is good economy to have a resident workman, to assist the collector, and to do the current repairs, —whitewashing, plastering, unstopping of drains and so on. The carelessness of the poor and their frequent changes, as well as the crowded state of the houses, make the calls on him incessant; and his being on the spot, if he is a trustworthy man, tends to promote quietness and to check the taking of lodgers. The snares into which com-

panies dealing with old properties have generally fallen, are, 1. buying too dear; 2. doing too much for their tenants; if a repairing company can steer clear of these, I see no reason why it should not pay a fair dividend and do much good; but probably the best plan is that companies should hold all kinds of house-property.

The example of the London Labourers' Dwellings' Society suggests, that it is best for an Association to begin by purchasing old houses which require improvement, but are not so bad as to make it necessary to turn the tenants out.* In this case rents begin to come in at once; a dividend can be declared at the end of the first half-year, and the company will get into working order before any great difficulties meet it. But very large deductions must be allowed for in dealing with old property, and the current repairs will of course increase rapidly. In purchasing the freehold of the lowest class of house property in London, it is not safe to calculate on clearing more than fifty per cent of the nominal weekly rental of the rooms. Repairs and rates, collection, bad debts, and empty rooms, swallow

* See Dr. Greenhill's pamphlet *On the Establishment of Cottage Improvement Societies*, 1862, p. 12.

up the other half. If any but the simplest and strongest fittings are put into such houses, they are a permanent source of expense.

All that tends to raise the character of the very poor will make it easier to improve their houses. At present the labour-books of workmen engaged in looking after such property are full of references to drains stopped with pieces of flannel, or with rags, or "green-stuff," or even with a hammer or a spoon. All these items, as well as direct losses by bad debts and changes, diminish the landlord's profits, and he has to protect himself against loss by raising the rent on respectable and careless tenants alike. Or else he is driven to the common practice of letting his houses to a comparatively trustworthy middleman at a moderate rent, and allowing him to make what he can out of them. It is an advantage in sanitary respects that there should be a person in each house, or in each two or three houses, on whom some sort of responsibility can be fastened; but the practice has a direct tendency to increase the rents which the poor have to pay.

CHAPTER XV.

CONCLUSION.

A HASTY survey of what is being done in London by religious and charitable agencies, produces the same sort of impression that is produced by reading about missionary work abroad. Much is being attempted in both fields, and with so much success, that we are inclined at first to feel as if there would soon be no heathenism left. But on further reflection we see that the number of agents is in both cases quite out of proportion to the amount of work to be done. When we read about the dark side, or go out into the smaller streets on a Sunday afternoon, we see how little impression has yet been made on the mass. In the best foreign missions the congregations are now taking up the work themselves by contributions and by personal service. It is this "spontaneous action of the whole Christian body" that is needed at home.

Let all of us who intend to abide by our undertaking to be Christ's faithful soldiers and servants, consider what we can do ourselves to help His cause, and to assist our poor neighbours, in this great city. "The highest motives," says Mr. Helps in his excellent *Claims of Labour*, "are those of the most sustained efficiency." It is to these that I appeal. And do not let us take up work impulsively or wilfully, but quietly and as a matter of duty. At present the state of London and its poor is a reproach to our Christianity; there must be many amongst its richer inhabitants upon whom the sense of this weighs oppressively, and to whom any considerable improvement would be like a lightening of the atmosphere around them. I am persuaded that if the church-going laity took the matter up in earnest such an improvement would gradually be brought about. "If these things were found in some thriving village," it has been well said, "the wealthier members of the little community would feel it incumbent on them to take the matter in hand. It is not because the town is larger and more populous, that the social duties of its inhabitants are less obligatory, that the rich are less bound to care for and

help the poor. The wealth and intelligence is even greater in proportion to the numbers ; the magnitude of the task is a reason not for throwing it up in despair, but for applying to it a more powerful machinery, a stronger motive power of voluntary effort and individual earnestness.”* A city, the rateable value—that is, the rental—of which is about fifteen million pounds a-year, can afford to pay large sums for any object which really concerns the welfare of its inhabitants ; and all experience shows that money will be willingly given for any purpose that commands sympathy, and to any persons that inspire confidence ; though it must be added that such money, when it is contributed through a voluntary subscription, and not by means of a rate, too often comes from the few rather than the many. The administration of the money is a more difficult matter than the raising of it. I agree with the author of *Social Duties* that we stand in equal need of personal labour and of organization. My book is intended to help those who are prepared to give the former ; the book I have just named is a valuable contribution to the literature of the latter subject.

* *Social Duties, by a Man of Business*, p. 53.

I have not said much about money contributions : perhaps I may say here that it is especially important that they should be regular. Let a man, when he is starting in life, make up his mind to contribute a tenth, or any other fixed proportion of his income to religious and charitable objects, and not only will the objects which he selects benefit by his regular support, but he will enjoy a delightful sense of richness for such purposes ; whilst a man who has made no such provision, but allows himself to live up to his income, though the calls on him may be no heavier, is likely to grudge every guinea, and much to exaggerate in thought the amount that has been wrung from him.

And let a man apply his money with judgment ; if he cannot find time to do some charitable work himself, let him at least watch some part of the work to which he contributes in a kindly, but business-like spirit, and check or encourage the workers as his common sense shows him that they need one or the other. Still, most of us ought to make time for some little personal work, if we are to do our duty as citizens, not to speak of our duty as Christians. We ought to have friends amongst the poor as well as amongst the rich ; it

is a poor thing for a man to limit his sympathies to his own class, or to have no personal knowledge of the wants of other classes.

Some men, again, need a caution not to attempt too much. I would recommend a new-comer to London to begin with some one branch of charitable work, whether it be schools or relief of distress, or whatever his circumstances may seem to point out, to make himself master of that, and to be very unwilling to take up any other voluntary work which is likely to prevent his doing full justice to it. All the different branches of work amongst the poor run up into one stem; and I am far from saying that he should not take an interest, and, as far as may be, lend help in other than his own particular work; but he should, I think, make up his mind which is his special work, and treat all other voluntary work as subordinate to that. And I would strongly recommend him not to lend his name, as a manager, to any scheme to the working of which he is not prepared to give substantial personal assistance.

Much good, as I have more than once said, would result from more general and more intelligent consideration for the poor on the part of the rich. One of the greatest evils from which the

poor of London suffer is the ebb and flow of employment, the alternation of season and slack time. I see no chance of the pressure of this evil being even diminished, excepting by the rich and poor alike exercising more forethought. Residents' in London, at least, can often, by acting with promptitude, give an order at a time when it does great good, whilst, if given a few weeks later, it would only increase pressure on persons who are already overworked. Internal repairs to houses and other work, which can be executed in winter, should, as far as possible, be done then.

If I may say a word to such London clergymen as may read my book, I would urge them to look their difficulties in the face, and to try to deal with some part of them exhaustively. I am well aware that it is in many cases impossible for them to overtake their work, and that they have to lay their plans with reference to their own strength, rather than to the demands of their parish. But this state of things should not be acquiesced in; and I would suggest, though with some diffidence, that, as a beginning, the exact condition of some one part of the parish should be thoroughly ascertained, and its wants, as far as may be, supplied. Such a district would

be a standard by which clergyman and congregation alike might measure the wants of the whole parish, and, as it became possible, the same care might gradually be extended to the rest. It appears to me that at present there is very little really exhaustive work done by any agency in the poorer parts of London.

Still we need not be discouraged. The arrears of two hundred years are not to be easily overtaken; and nothing can be more certain than that the spiritual and material evils affecting the poor of London, which this generation and the last have been trying to deal with, were steadily increasing during the whole of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Such a city as London is a comparatively new phenomenon in the world's history; but the divine character of Christianity enables it to meet new difficulties as they arise; and if it does not overcome them, it is the fault of its professors. It is an encouraging thought that whilst the religions of the world have, for the most part, confessed their despair of human society by imagining a heaven of fields and bowers, the Christian religion "decrees, not only the individual happiness, but the corporate perfection of man; and closes the book of its pro-

phesy by assuring the children of the living God that ' He hath prepared for them a *city.*' ”*

“ The home to which I'm hasting
Is not in some silent glen ;
The place where my hopes are resting
Is a city of living men.

The crowds are there ; but the sadness
Is fled, with the toil and pain ;
Nought is heard but the song of gladness,
"Tis the city of holy men." †

* *Bampton Lectures for 1864*, by Rev. T. D. Bernard,
p. 232.

† *Hymns of Faith and Hope*, by Horatius Bonar, D.D.

APPENDIX I.

THE objects of the Lay Helpers' Association are so nearly akin to those of this book, that I need not apologise for giving some extracts from its Papers here. I may add, however, that the book was planned and in great part written, before I was asked to undertake the Lay Secretaryship of the Association.

“ At a Meeting held at London House, 15th May, 1865, the Bishop of London in the chair, the following recommendations, founded on a report of the sub-committee on Lay Agency of the Bishop of London's Fund Committee, were adopted in the form of resolutions :—

1. It is desirable to organise in the diocese of London a body of laymen of all classes, under the Bishop, to assist the clergy gratuitously, especially those of poor and populous parishes, in various branches of their parochial work.

2. With this view the sub-committee suggest that an Association be formed, of which the Bishop of London shall be the President, under the name of 'The Association of Lay Helpers for the Diocese of London.' ”

The subsequent Resolutions of the Meeting have been embodied in the following Rules :

1. Persons desirous to become Members of the Association (who must be Communicants) shall offer themselves or be proposed to the Bishop.
2. A register of the names and addresses of the Members shall be kept, showing what description of work each unemployed Member may be willing to undertake, and also the place and the nature of the work in which each employed Member is engaged.
3. Upon the application of Incumbents, Members of the Association shall be put into communication with them with a view to such arrangements for lay-assistance in Parochial work as may be mutually agreed upon.
4. Once in every year the Members shall have the opportunity of attending Divine Service and receiving the Holy Communion together.
5. Once, at least, in every year, a Meeting of the Members shall be held, under the Presidency of the Bishop if possible, in order to consult together upon one or more of the various branches of work in which they are engaged, and to make such regulations in regard to their own proceedings as may from time to time be found necessary or expedient.
6. The Executive Committee shall be appointed by the Bishop, year by year, at the Annual Meeting.

The following hints as to the kind of work which Laymen may undertake, are taken from a Paper printed by the Association with the Bishop's approval.

I. SUNDAY WORK.

1. Teaching or superintendence of Sunday Schools, seeking out children who do not go to school, conducting

Special Morning Services for younger children, also Evening Services for children generally.

2. Conducting Bible Classes for young men, also Classes for children or others held at the Teacher's own house.
3. Systematically visiting the poor and sick for religious conversation and instruction, both at their own homes and at Hospitals and Workhouse infirmaries.
- *4. Conducting or assisting at Services for the poor in School and Mission Rooms, and in the open-air.
- *5. Attending and taking part at religious discussions among the working classes.
6. Distributing tracts in the streets and parks, and also from house to house.
7. Assisting at Church Services as members of choirs ; by reading the Lessons, or by attending to the comfortable seating of the poor.
8. Seeking out the unbaptized, encouraging the newly confirmed to come to Holy Communion, inducing the poor to attend Church.

II. EVENING WORK.

1. Teaching in Night and Ragged Schools.
2. Management of Working Men's Clubs and Youth's Institutes, assistance at popular Lectures, Penny Readings, and other means of recreation.
3. Attendance at Penny Banks, Clothing Funds, and School and Parochial Libraries.
4. Visiting the poor, either generally, or in a defined district, the families in which shall be considered especially under the care of the visitor.
- *5. Assisting in and conducting Services in School and Mission Rooms, and the open-air.
6. Assisting in Church Services as above, also practising Church and School Choirs.

III. DAY WORK.

1. Visiting the poor and sick as above.
2. Collecting and canvassing for funds for Parochial and Mission purposes.
3. Acting as Secretaries to Parochial Institutions, and Religious and Charitable Societies.

IV. GENERAL WORK.

Endeavouring by personal influence and exertions to further the cause of Lay-Agency, so as to strengthen the hands of those already labouring in the work, and encourage others to follow their example.

“It will, of course, be understood that all the work thus suggested is to be done with the sanction and under the direction of the Clergy of the parishes or districts in which the members work.

“Members desirous of entering upon those sections of work to which an asterisk (*) is prefixed, will require special sanction from the Bishop before doing so.”

The following *Occasional Paper*, printed in January 1868, illustrates the working of the Association :

“The Association of Lay Helpers for the Diocese of London was founded by the Bishop of London in 1865.

“It is open to Laymen of all classes, being Communicants of the Church of England, and taking interest in voluntary work.

“Clergymen interesting themselves in the objects of the Association are entered in the Register as Corresponding Members.

“Its objects are :—

1. To call out voluntary help by making known the

kinds of work in which the Clergy want assistance.

2. To distribute this agency. The Association seeks to strengthen the Parochial system; but, as it cannot be assumed that Laymen will always find the work that suits their abilities and the time at their disposal in the parish in which they happen to reside, it endeavours to put each Member in communication with a Clergyman who wants such help as he can give.
3. To afford all Lay Helpers a common centre and definite relationship to the Bishop and to each other, with opportunities of conference about different modes of remedying the great evils which exist amongst us.

“The original and most important purpose of the Association was to send fresh workers to help the over-weighted Clergy of large and poor parishes. In this the Committee regret to say that they have not yet had the success they wish for. The Association contains 154 Lay Members, but most of these were at work before they joined it, and others have too little time to spare to go to needy and out-lying districts. The Committee are persuaded that there must be Lay Members of the Church of England in London and its neighbourhood with leisure and capacity to give much valuable assistance.* They would call the attention of such, and indeed of all laymen into whose hands this paper may come, to the applications

* In one case the Association sent a gentleman, making a short stay in London, to help in a newly formed district for a fortnight; the incumbent assures the Committee that his zealous visiting of the poor for that short time did much to stir them up.

for help that they have received from different parts of London.

“ From the Eastern and North-Eastern (postal) districts numerous applications have been received. Men, able and willing to give two or three afternoons a-week to co-operation with a single-handed, or almost single-handed Clergyman, in parishes which can be reached in an hour from most parts of the town, might be most useful there. Sunday help and Evening help are also much needed, and may be looked for from men of business residing in or near the district. Applications have been made for volunteers to assist Clergymen in their secular work, and especially in organizing it, to visit amongst the poor with a view either to religious instruction or temporal relief, to take Mission Services or a Children’s Service, and to superintend and teach in Sunday or Evening Schools.

“ From the Northern district an application has been recently received (from the neighbourhood of King’s Cross) for Visitors, Sunday School Teachers, and Teachers in a Night School.

“ In the East Central and West Central districts two Lay Helpers are wanted to conduct a Mission Service together, a Superintendent for a Sunday School, Teachers for Sunday Schools and Night Schools, Teachers for Lads’ Classes on Sunday afternoons, and Visitors to the Poor. An application for Lay help has also been received in general terms from that small part of the Southern district which is in the Diocese.

“ In the Western and South-Western districts applications have been made for Visitors to the poor in afternoon or evening, for Visitors to a few sick or old persons on Sunday afternoons (in a district of Kensington), for Sunday School Teachers and other Lay help in a poor part of Chelsea, and for assistance in a Choir.

“ The Chaplains of several Workhouses would, it is

believed, be glad of gentlemen to visit in the Infirm Wards, on Sunday afternoons.

* * * * *

"In pursuance of the third object, a Public Conference was held at Willis's Rooms, on the evening of the 20th November, Vice-Chancellor Sir W. Page Wood in the chair. At this the Bishop of London reminded those present that the Statistical Committee of his Fund had estimated that 500 additional paid Lay-Agents were needed in the Diocese, and expressed his hope that the Association might undertake some considerable part of the work as volunteers, as the Fund was quite unable to provide any such number. Papers were then read by members and others, giving a brief survey of Lay-help, under the heads of Sunday Work, Evening Work and Day Work, with short intervals for discussion. It is intended that Conferences for the Members and their friends shall be held from time to time, at each of which papers on some one branch of Lay-work will be read and discussed.

"Communications and inquiries may be addressed to the Rev. W. F. Erskine Knollys, Chaplain and Hon. Sec. of the Association, at Twickenham Common, or to C. B. P. Bosanquet, Esq., Hon. Sec., at 4 Brunswick Terrace, Kensington.

"Communications and inquiries having reference to the W.C. and E.C. districts, or to that part of the S. district which is in the Diocese, can also be addressed to the Rev. Berdmore Compton, 7 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden; such as relate to the E. and N. E. districts, to Thomas Beck, Esq., 10 Newmarket Terrace, Cambridge Heath, N. E.; and such as relate to the N. district, to G. Martin Tait, Esq., Church of England Young Men's Society, Canonbury Tower, Islington; Hon. District Secretaries.

"January 4th, 1868."

APPENDIX II.

List of the Metropolitan Dwellings Improvement Associations, with their Offices, and names of Secretaries.

1. The Society for Improving the Condition of the Labouring classes. Office, 21 Exeter Hall. Sec. Mr. Charles Payne.

2. The Metropolitan Association for Improving the Dwellings of the Industrious Classes. Office, 19 Coleman Street, E.C. Sec. Mr. Charles Gatliff.

3. St. George's Hanover Square Parochial Association for the Improvement of Dwellings for the Labouring Classes. Hon. Sec. Mr. T. W. Callow, 8 Park Lane.

4. The Marylebone Association for Improving the Dwellings of the Industrious Classes. Office, 65 Marylebone Road. Sec. Mr. C. R. Stokes.

5. The Strand Buildings Company. Sec. Mr. Charles Belton, 33 Norfolk Street, Strand.

6. The Central London Dwellings Improvement Company, Limited. Office, 13 Cook's Court, Lincoln's

Inn. Hon. Secs. Messrs. C. B. P. Bosanquet and R. D. Wilson.

7. The London Labourers' Dwellings Society, Limited. Office, 66 Cannon Street, E.C. Sec. Dr. Greenhill.

8. The Improved Industrial Dwellings Company, Limited. Office, 2 West Street, Finsbury Circus. Sec. Mr. J. Aldous Mays.

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